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THE HOODED HORSEMAN

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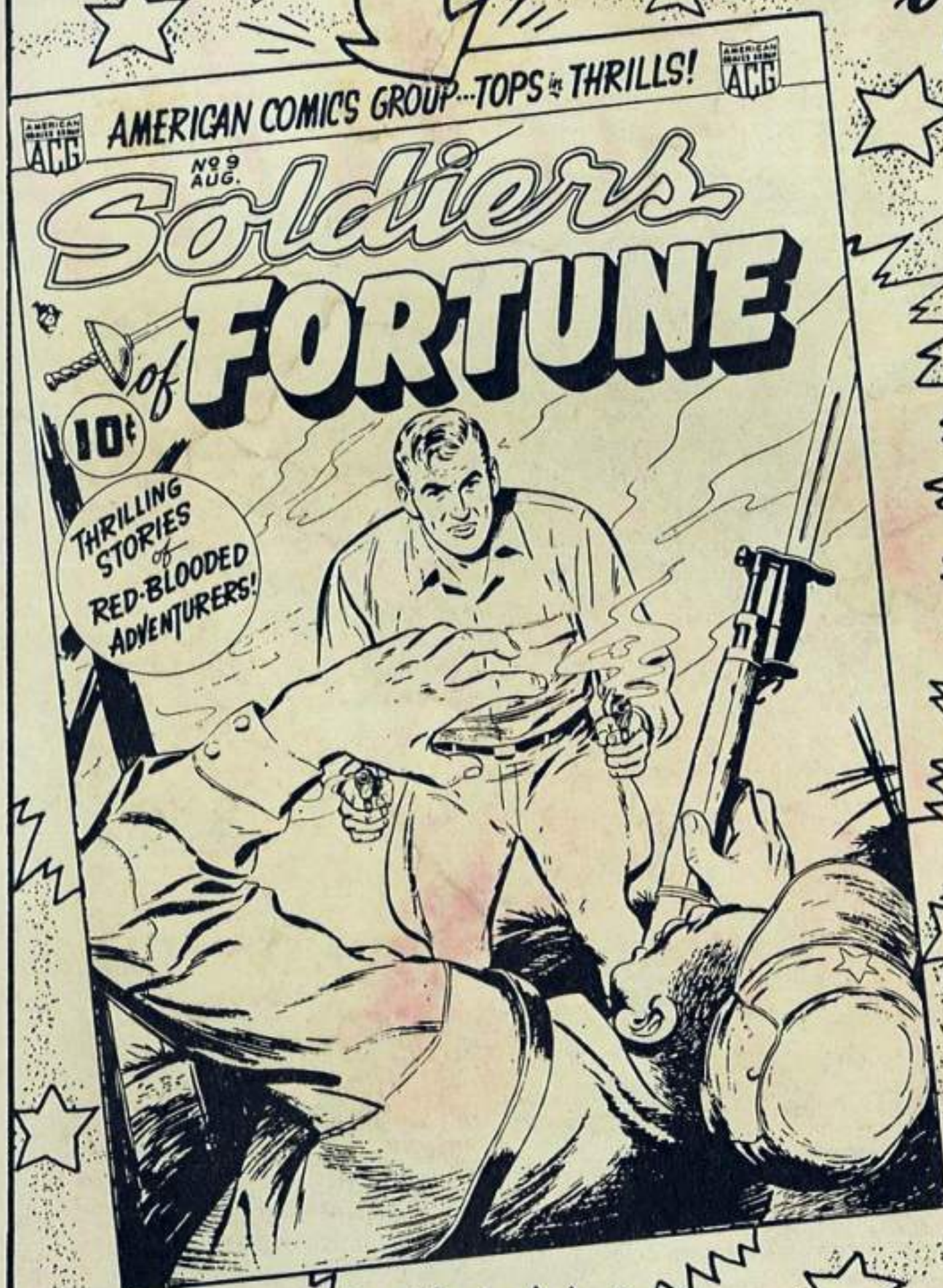
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The HOODED HORSEMAN



WHO IS THE HOODED HORSEMAN? A SINGLE INCIDENT MADE THIS DARK-GARBED FIGURE AS HARD AS THE JAWS OF A STEEL TRAP-- AND THAT WAS THE COWARDLY AMBUSH OF HIS FATHER, THE SHERIFF OF MESA CITY! IT WAS THEN THAT **BUD FRASER** BUCKLED ON HIS FATHER'S GUNS-- IT WAS THEN THAT HIS EYES TOOK ON THE SEARCHING GLINT THAT BADMEN WOULD COME TO FEAR-- WHEN HE GALLOPS ON THE TRAIL OF OUTLAWRY AS THE **HOODED HORSEMAN!**

IN A SMALL WYOMING COW TOWN--

WAL, FLASH-- I RECKON IT'S TIME WE HOLED UP FER A SPELL! I'VE HEARD O' THE VASCO RANCH AN' OTHER BIG OUTFITS HEREABOUTS -- MEBBE I KIN LINE UP A WRANGLER'S JOB!

HOWDY, PARDNER! MEBBE YUH KIN TELL ME IF THAR'S ANY CHANCE O' GITTIN' WORK IN THESE PARTS!

LOOK! WE WERE JEST WONDERIN' WHAR WE'D FIND A STRANGER-- HOW ABOUT THAT GALOOT?

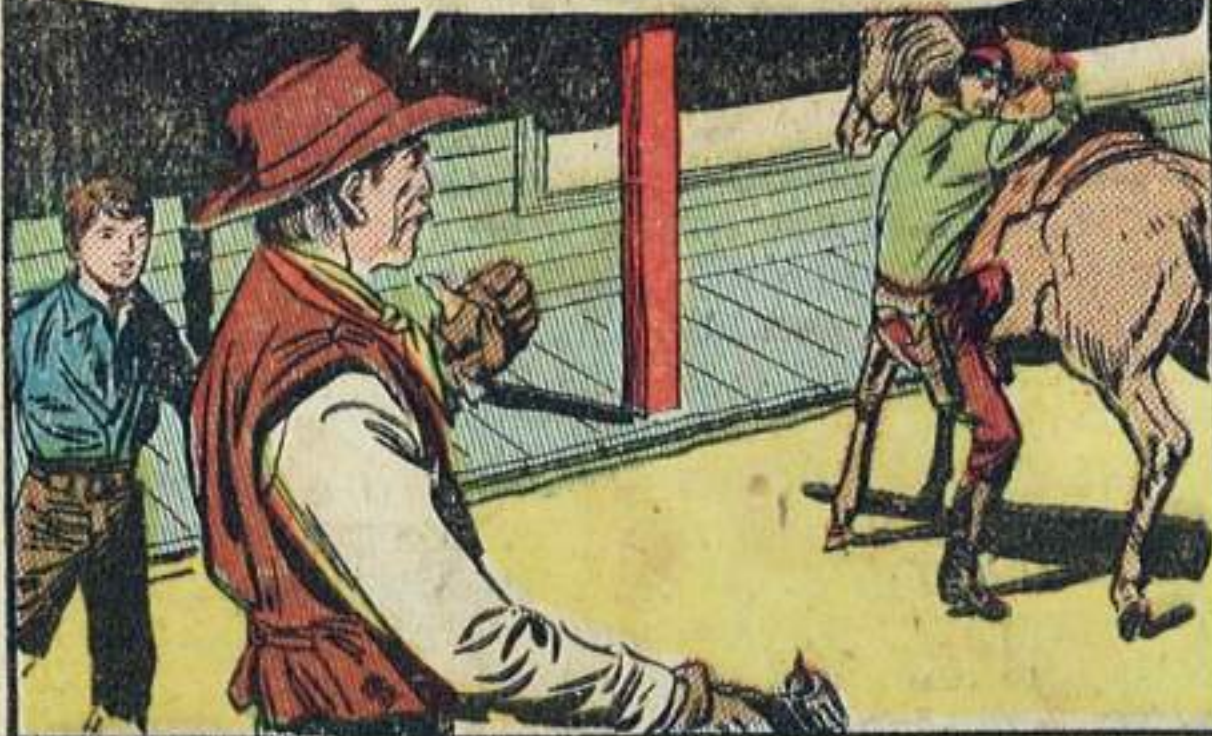
AMIGO-- MEBBE YUH AN' ME KIN GIT TOGETHER! **STRETCH BRANDON'S** MUH NAME-- WHAT'S YORES?

BUD FRASER!



FOR A MOMENT, BUD SCANS THE SCARRED FACE AND DROOPING EYELIDS-- AND SUDDENLY REMEMBERS! TWELVE YEARS BEFORE...

THAR'S NO ROOM IN MESA CITY FOR YORE KIND, BRANDON! HIT THE TRAIL-- SAVVY?



CRIMPERS, DAD--YUH SHORE MADE 'IM KNUCKLE UNDER! WHO'S THAT WADDY YUH WERE DRESSIN' DOWN?

BUD, IF THAR WAS EVER A SHIFTY, BACK-SHOOTIN' BUZZARD-- IT'S STRETCH BRANDON! I'VE NEVER BEEN ABLE TUH CATCH 'IM REDHANDED-- BUT ONE O' THESE DAYS-- HE'S GOIN' TUH MAKE A MISTAKE!



IT ISN'T LIKELY THAT STRETCH BRANDON REMEMBERED THE SHERIFF OF MESA CITY-- OR PERHAPS HE WOULD HAVE RECOGNIZED THE SAME STEADY GAZE THAT CONFRONTED HIM NOW-- FROM THE EYES OF HIS SON!

WHAT'S YORE DEAL, BRANDON?

I'M LOOKIN' FER A WADDY WHO KIN TAKE ORDERS AN' MAKE HIMSELF USEFUL! IF YUH'RE INTERESTED-- I WANT YUH TUH GIT SOMETHIN' FER ME AT THE VASCO RANCH TONIGHT! YUH'LL FIND A GALT HAR NAMED JUANITA-- JEST TELL HER STRETCH BRANDON SENT YUH!



THAT NIGHT--

STRETCH BRANDON'S UP TUH SOMETHIN', FLASH-- AN' IT MIGHT BE A GOOD IDEE TUH TRAIL THOSE TWO PARDS O' HIS FIRST!



MILES BEYOND-- ON A MOONLIT SLOPE OVERLOOKING THE VASCO RANCH--

THEY'RE DISMOUNTIN' WITH CARBINES--AN' THAT MEANS LONG RANGE GUNPLAY! I'D BETTER SNEAK UP ON 'EM-- FAST!



THAT FRASER HOMBRE DOESN'T SAVVY WHAT HE'S GITTIN' INTUH-- BUT JUANITA VASCO'S SHORE TUH OPEN FIRE THE MINUTE HE MENTION'S STRETCH'S NAME!

BEIN' A GAL, SHE'LL LIKELY MISS-- BUT THAT WON'T SAVE HIS HIDE-- BECAUSE WE'LL BE FIRIN' AT THE SAME TIME!



RECKON I MIGHT AS WELL SAVE YUH POLECATS SOME AMMUNITION! REACH!

SUFFERIN' SASSAFRAS-- BUD FRASER!





SECONDS LATER, INSIDE THE RANCH HOUSE...

JUANITA, THERE IS A RIDER OUTSIDE-- A STRANGER!

THIS TIME, I'M READY! FOR WEEKS, I'VE BEEN MENACED BY STRETCH BRANDON AND HIS HENCHMEN-- AND IF THIS IS ONE OF THEM.. I'M GOING TO CARRY OUT MY THREAT!



KEEP MOUNTED, STATE YOUR BUSINESS-- AND DON'T WASTE WORDS!

RECKON YUH'LL KNOW THE WADDY WHO SENT ME-- STRETCH BRANDON!



THIS WILL TEACH YOU TO HEED A WARNING FROM JUANITA VASCO!



RECKON THIS'LL LOOK PURTY CONVINCIN'-- I'VE CAUGHT ONE FOOT IN THE STIRRUP! GIT MOVIN', BRONC!



CARAMBA! IF HE IS NOT DEAD NOW, JUANITA-- HE WILL BE BY THE TIME HIS HORSE COMES TO A HALT!

PANCHO--WHAT HAVE I DONE? IF HE IS ONE OF STRETCH BRANDON'S OUTLAWS, I MEANT ONLY TO DRIVE HIM AWAY, NOT KILL HIM!



MINUTES LATER--

MEBBE YUH THOUGHT BUD FRASER WAS A PUSHOVER, STRETCH-- BUT WE LEARNED DIFFERENT! HE JUMPED US-- AFTER FINDIN' US READY FER AN AMBUSH!

SIMMER DOWN! HE WAS LOCO ENOUGH TUH RIDE DOWN TUH THE RANCH AFTER GITTIN' YUH TWO CORRALED-- AN' I GOT THAR JEST IN TIME TUH SEE WHAT HAPPENED!



HOPPIN' HORNED TOADS, STRETCH-- YUH MEAN JUANITA PLUGGED HIM AFTER ALL?

YEP--AN' SHE DID A GOOD JOB! WE'RE SHORE TUH FIND HIS CARCASS OUT IN THE BRUSH WHAR HIS HOSS DRAGGED HIM-- AFTER I'VE HAD A PALAVER WITH THAT GAL!



MEANWHILE, A SHORT DISTANCE FROM THE RANCH --

FIRST OFF, FLASH-- I'M GITTIN' INTUH MUH **HOODED HORSEMAN** COSTUME-- AN' THEN I'VE GOT A JOB FER YUH!

WUF!



SOON-- THAT GASH ON MUH LEG GAVE ME A CHANCE TUH FAKE A FEW BLOODSTAINS-- AN' FLASH KIN DO THE REST! HERE, BOY! GRAB THESE DUDS-- **CHEW 'EM UP!**



WITH FLASH CERTAIN THAT THE **HOODED HORSEMAN** IS URGING HIM INTO SOME KIND OF STRANGE NEW GAME --



RIDERS! THAT'S GOOD ENOUGH, FLASH-- DUCK BEHIND THIS ROCK!



WHOA! TAKE A LOOK, JUANITA! THAR'S WHAT'S LEFT O' BUD FRASER!

YOU MEAN THE MAN I SHOT? BUT WHAT HAPPENED TO HIS **BODY?**



JUDGIN' BY THESE PAW PRINTS-- AN' THE WAY HIS OUTFIT'S RIPPED TUH SHREDS--THE ANSWER IS **COYOTES!** THOSE SKULKIN' CRITTERS FINISHED OFF THE REMAINS, JUANITA -- BUT YUH DID THE **MURDERIN'!**



I-- I DIDN'T MEAN TO! I THOUGHT HE WAS ONE OF **YOUR** MEN --

GAL-- EVERYONE IN THE ROYAL FLUSH SALOON **HEARD** THIS GALOOT SAY HE WAS RIDIN' OUT TUH SEE YUH ABOUT A JOB! **MEBBE** THEY'LL FIGGER HE CHANGED HIS MIND AND LEFT FER OTHER PARTS -- BUT **THAT'LL DEPEND ON WHETHER I KEEP QUIET!**





WHY ARE YOU SO INTERESTED IN THE RANCH? THE HERDS YOU SEE BE-LONG TO OTHER OUTFITS-- I MERELY LEASE MY LAND FOR GRAZING!

YEP-- AN' IT'S THE ONLY GRAZIN' LAND FER 50 MILES AROUND-- AFTER THEM PRAIRIE FIRES WE SET ALL LAST WEEK! THOUSANDS O' CATTLE ARE BELLOWIN' FER GRASS, JUANITA -- AN' ONCE I'VE GOT A SAY--SO AROUND HERE--THEM STOCKMEN ARE GOIN' TUH PAY PLENTY FER IT!



EVEN IF THE RANCHERS DON'T KICK IN-- I'M COUNTIN' ON HERDS O' HUNGRY COWS STAMPELIN' ONTUH THE VASCO RANGE! THEM CATTLE I'M ROUNDIN' UP-- AN' AS PART OWNER-- I'LL BE WITHIN' MUH RIGHTS!

RECKON I'VE HEARD ENOUGH! STAY PUT, FLASH!



THAR'S JEST ONE THING WRONG WITH YORE SCHEME, BRANDON -- I HAPPENED TUH BE LISTENIN'!

JUMPIN' JIMSON-- THE HOODED HORSEMAN!



AS ONE OF THE ACCOMPLICES DRAWS--

UNLESS YUH HANKER TUH JUGGLE A TOMBSTONE ON YORE CHEST, HOMBRE-- LEAVE YORE OTHER SHOOTIN' IRON JEST WHAR IT IS!

AGH!

BANG



UNEXPECTEDLY--

OHH!

HOLD YORE FIRE, HORSEMAN-- UNLESS YUH HANKER TUH SEE HER STOPPIN' LEAD!



I'M WARNIN' YUH SIDEWINDERS-- YUH'RE NOT GITTIN' AWAY WITH THIS!

WE'RE HOLDIN' THE GAL AT OUR HIDEOUT-- AN' WHETHER SHE LIVES DEPENDS ON WHETHER THAR'S ANY MEDDLIN' FROM YUH! I'M POSTIN' A COUPLE O' WADDIES IN TOWN TUH KEEP TABS ON YUH-- SO DON'T GIT ANY SMART IDEES!



AS THE OUTLAWS RIDE OFF--

A MURDERIN' COYOTE LIKE STRETCH WOULDN'T THINK TWICE ABOUT MURDERIN' JUANITA! BUT NOW THAT HE FIGGERS BUD FRASER IS DEAD-- I'VE GOT A PURTY GOOD CHANCE O' SETTIN' A TRAP!

NEXT DAY, IN A GULLY NEAR
THE VASCO RANCH--

IT'S A GOOD THING I HAD A
SPARE OUTFIT IN MUH SADDLE-
BAGS! I COULD RIDE TUH
TOWN AN' TANGLE WITH 'EM
THAR-- BUT I AIM TUH BE
SHORE O' NABBIN' 'EM --
AN' THIS'LL DO IT!



FLASH-- GIT TUH TOWN! THE
PLACE I WAS YESTERDAY--
SAVVY? STAY THAR--
WAIT FER ME!



SOON AS HE REACHES TOWN,
HE'LL STOP AT THE ONE PLACE
HE SAW ME GO INTUH-- THE
ROYAL FLUSH SALOON!
AN' IF I KNOW STRETCH
BRANDON'S WADDIES--
THAT'S WHAR THEY'LL
BE HANGIN' OUT!



SOON AFTERWARD--

CRIMPIN' COYOTES--LOOK!
THAT'S BUD FRASER'S DOG--
AN' HE RECOGNIZES US!



WHAT ABOUT IT? ONE UGLY
MOVE OUTA HIM-- AN' HE'S
A DEAD MUTT!

HOLD ON
THAR, GENTS!



NO CALL TO GIT EXCITED-- RECKON THE PUP'S JEST
TRYIN' TUH SHOW YUH HE'S GOT THIS HERE NOTE!



HOPPIN' HORNED TOADS-- IT'S FROM
BUD FRASER! HE'S BADLY SHOT UP--
CAN'T GIT OUT O' MESQUITE
GULCH WITHOUT HELP!

DID YUH SAY
BUD FRASER?



RECKON I'D
BETTER GIT
DOC MITCHELL
AN' A COUPLE
O' THE BOYS
OUT THAR--
PRONTO!

JEST LEAVE IT
TUH US, OLD
TIMER-- WE'LL
TAKE CARE O'
EVERYTHIN'!



SOON AFTERWARD--

THAR HE
IS-- WAITIN'
FER US!

THIS'LL BE EASY!
ALL WE HAVE TUH
DO IS FINISH HIM
OFF-- AN' SAY HE
WAS DEAD WHEN
WE GOT HERE!



UNEXPECTEDLY--

RECKON I MIGHT AS WELL
SAVE THE CORONER A TRIP,
YUH VARMINTS! THAT
WAS JUST
MUH BOOT
YUH
SAW!

UGH!

BANG!



A MOMENT LATER--

I'LL BE BACK PRONTO--
WITH MUH FRIEND,
THE HOODED HORSE-
MAN! HE'LL BE PLUMB
INTERESTED IN FINDIN'
WAYS TUH MAKE YUH
PALAVER ABOUT WHAR
STRETCH BRANDON'S
HIDIN' OUT!

THE HOODED HORSE-
MAN! DON'T GIT HIM
AFTER US-- WE'RE
TALKIN' NOW! JEST
TELL THE HORSEMAN
TUH RIDE OUT TUH
GUNPOWDER ROCK--
HE'LL FIND THE
REST O' THE GANG
THAR!



A SHORT DISTANCE BEYOND--

NOW THAT I'VE PROVED BUD FRASER ISN'T DEAD,
JUANITA WON'T HAVE ANYTHING TO WORRY
ABOUT-- AN' I KIN SQUARE MUH ACCOUNT
WITH STRETCH AS THE HOODED
HORSEMAN!



AS THE DARK-GARBED AVENGER REACHES
GUNPOWDER ROCK--

CRIMPERS, BRONC--
WATCH OUT!

SUFFERIN'
SASSAFRAS!





THE HOODED HORSEMAN FIGHTS AGAIN-- QUICK AS A WHIP LASH-- DEADLY AS A MOUNTAIN LION-- IN THE NEXT ISSUE!

DESERT JUSTICE

ACE BRACK, THE gambler from the East, poured another swallow of whiskey down his gullet, but it didn't relax him. Intently, he watched the hot desert sun beat down mercilessly on the toiling wagoneers, their backs glistening with sweat as they dug deeper into the lonely sands, deep enough to bury Thomason Devers, their wagon leader, who had been murdered the day before.

Ace knew they suspected him. Well, he HAD lost his head in an argument and killed Devers...but they couldn't prove anything, and he certainly wasn't going to confess. No, he wasn't worried, not really, but as he gulped down the remaining liquor he glanced uneasily at Salty, the half-breed guide. For some strange reason Salty had insisted that the wagons drive on another day till they reached the water holes nearby, before burying their leader.

Throwing the empty whiskey bottle away, Ace swaggered to the diggers and said, "I'll lend you boys a hand." A wagoneer looked contemptuously at the neatly dressed gambler. "You...YOU'RE gonna dirty your lily-white paws?" he sneered.

"I'll give Thomason Devers a hand down to the Devil any time," muttered Ace, and instantly regretted it. No use letting anybody know how he felt about Devers; he decided to keep his mouth shut among these strange westerners. As he dug he noticed that the minister was listening intently to something Salty was whispering in his ear, and he fancied that they were talking about him. "Let them talk," he said to himself. "They can't prove anything, and I'm not talking."

Later, when everybody bared their heads under the blazing sun and the minister began his sermon, Ace imagined that somehow the words were intended to scare him into confessing. "He's wasting his time," thought Ace grimly. "I don't believe in all his nonsense about the Devil and damnation and hell-fire." But soon he began

feeling strangely uncomfortable. The minister's words went round and around in his head, and his vision reeled from standing under the burning sky bareheaded for so long. And while the sermon droned on about eternal justice and inevitable retribution, Ace began to feel the liquor he had drunk parching his throat mercilessly. And suddenly the scorching sands under his feet burned his shoe leather and sent to his nostrils an odor faintly akin to the smoking brimstone the minister spoke of.

He was extremely relieved when the service was over and the men shuffled slowly back to the wagons. Salty looked at Ace's flushed face and murmured, "You look awful hot...almost like desert fever."

"Wh...what's desert fever?" mumbled Ace, a cold shiver creeping along his spine.

"Oh...it's nothin'. But you better drink some of that cool water in the spring yonder."

"Yeah...guess so," said Ace, wiping beads of perspiration from his forehead. The ground seemed to heave under his feet as he stumbled towards the water hole in the distance. Something seemed to explode inside his head as he stumbled up to the cooling waters, and suddenly he felt shivers. "D...desert fever!" he mumbled. "It must be...I need water...cool water." But as he bent his parched lips closer he thought he felt even hotter than before, and when he plunged his head in the water hole he screamed, clutched his scalded face, and collapsed muttering, "I...I'm dying...I know I am...it's justice...like the minister said...because I killed a fellow man in...cold blood..."

When the wagoneers picked him up a few minutes later he was still mumbling the same words. "Just a bad case of sunstroke," said Salty to the grim-faced men. "I figured he'd babble what we needed to know. I guess he didn't know that we have HOT SPRINGS in these parts. Must've been quite a surprise when he expected cool water to go down his murderin' throat!"

the "POPSICLE" KIDS SAVE THE DAY

TESS AND TIM SOLVE A BIG GIFT PROBLEM

WOW! WE ALMOST FORGOT MOM AND POP'S WEDDING ANNIVERSARY!

IT'S NEXT WEEK AND I DON'T HAVE MUCH MONEY FOR A GIFT!

I'M BROKE TOO!

I GOT IT! WE'LL USE THE "POPSICLE" GIANT GIFT LIST!

TERRIFIC IDEA!

HERE'S A BEAUTIFUL PLASTIC APRON FOR MOM... A HUNTING KNIFE FOR DAD!

I'LL COUNT OUR BAGS!

THE BIG DAY

MY, WHAT A LOVELY APRON!

AND LOOK AT THIS SWELL HUNTING KNIFE!

YOU SAID IT! AND THESE "POPSICLE" GIFTS ARE SWELL PRESENTS FOR ANY OCCASION, FOR ANYONE, TOO!

SAVED BY THE BAGS WITH THE POLKA DOTS, EH KIDS?

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UNSUNG WESTERN HEROES

- BOBBY CURTIS -

IN 1857, TWELVE YEAR OLD BOBBY CURTIS WAS A WITNESS TO A HORRIBLE SCENE! WITHOUT WARNING OUTLAW MATT GOWDY SHOT DOWN HIS FATHER, JUDGE CURTIS OF MOHAWK, ARIZONA...



GOWDY ESCAPED TO HIS GANG HIDEOUT IN THE MOHAWK MOUNTAINS -- AND THERE WASN'T A TOWNSMAN WHO DARED TO PURSUE HIM THERE, BECAUSE THE OUTLAWS COULD HOLD OFF AN ARMY FROM THEIR STRATEGIC POSITIONS OVERLOOKING THE ONLY TRAIL LEADING TO THE HIDEOUT! BUT THERE WAS ONE INDIVIDUAL BRAVE ENOUGH TO ENTER THE OUTLAW'S LAIR!



THE SHOT AWAKENED THE OTHER THREE GANGMEN, WHO TOOK ONE LOOK AT THE UNWAVERING GUN LEVELED AT THEM-- AND DECIDED NOT TO RESIST THE GRIM YOUTH WHO HAD KILLED ONE OF THE WEST'S MOST NOTORIOUS OUTLAWS!

LOOK-- JUDGE CURTIS' SON CAPTURED THE WHOLE GOWDY GANG!

WHAT A KID!

INJUN JONES

I CERTAINLY HOPE YOU'RE NOT SLATED FOR MORE TROUBLE, INJUN -- NOW THAT **ROCKY MANTON** AND HIS GANG ARE BACK IN TOWN!

SHORE WISH I KNEW WHAT MANTON AN' HIS PARDS WERE UP TUH DURIN' THE MONTH THEY WERE AWAY -- SOMEWHAR UP NORTH, ACCORDIN' TUH MUH APACHE SCOUTS! BUT I MADE UP MUH MIND TUH KEEP MUH EYE ON MANTON SINCE THEY RETURNED FIVE DAYS AGO -- AN' THAT'S WHY WE'RE TRAILIN' THOSE BUZZARDS NOW!

THERE WAS ONE WORD, RELAYED ALONG THE LENGTH OF A CREAKING WAGON TRAIN, THAT COULD BRING A STAB OF FEAR TO THE TOUGHEST MULE SKINNER OUT OF SANTA FE -- **CHEYENNE!** THIS WAS THE TRIBE THAT SWEEPED SOUTH FROM THE COLORADO PLAINS WITH RED-TIPPED LANCES AND A HUNGER FOR SCALPS -- UNTIL **INJUN JONES** GAVE THEM A TASTE OF APACHE FURY AT THE **BATTLE OF PINTO CANYON!**



CRIMPIN' COYOTES, VICKIE! LOOK THAR -- AN' TELL ME WHAT YUH SEE!

HOOF PRINTS! BUT THAT CAN'T BE THE MANTON GANG, INJUN -- THERE MUST BE AT LEAST A HUNDRED RIDERS!

YEP -- AN' THEM UNSHOD PONIES MEAN JEST ONE THING -- A **RED-SKIN WAR PARTY!** I'M NOT SHORE THEY AIM TUH JUMP THE APACHES -- BUT WITH MOST O' RED CLOUD'S BRAVES OUT AFTER BUFFALO -- WE WON'T STAND A CHANCE IF IT COMES TUH A SHOWDOWN! YUH'D BETTER RAISE DUST, GAL, AN' WARN RED CLOUD -- WHILE I TRY TUH GIT AN' IDEE O' WHAT'S BREWIN'!

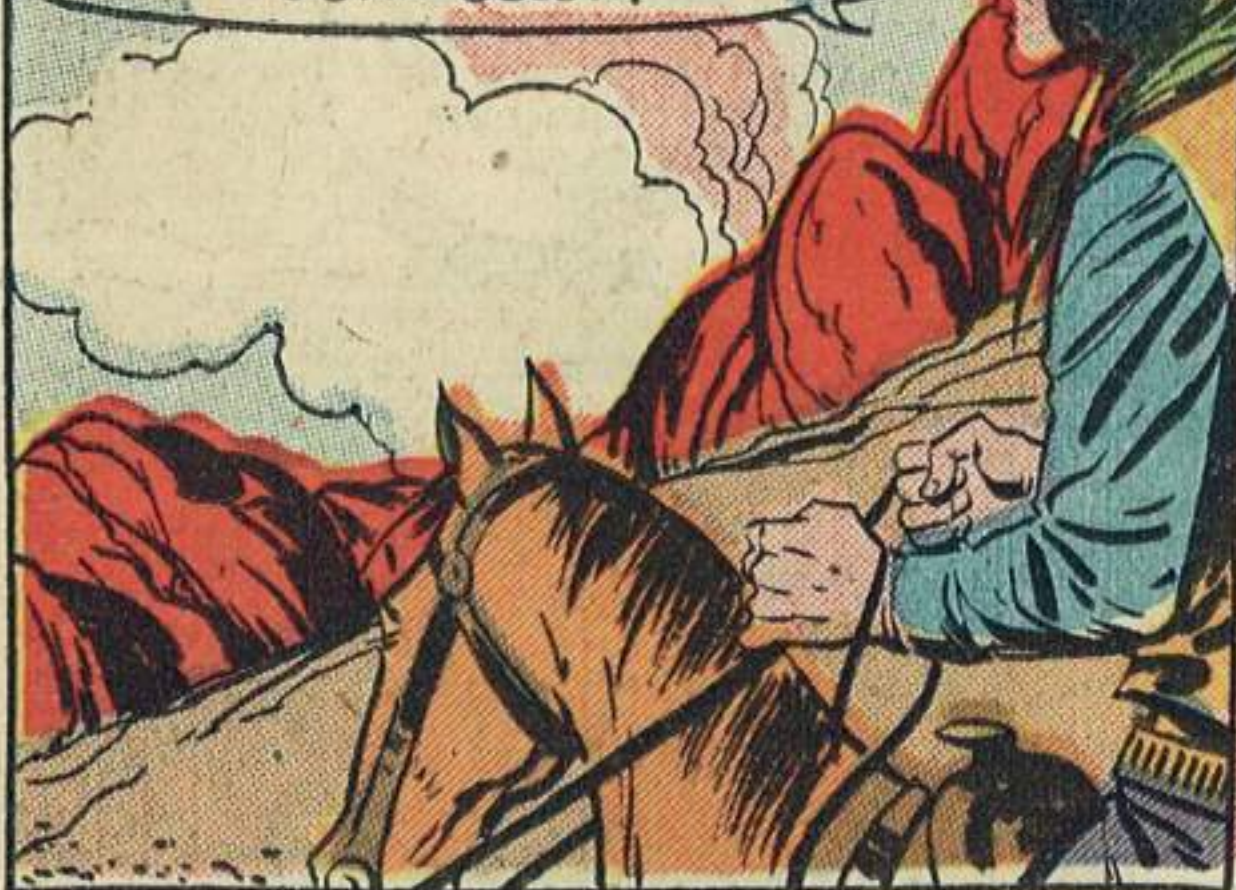
I DON'T LIKE THIS, INJUN! WITH BOTH THE MANTON GANG AND A STRANGE WAR PARTY OUT ON THE RANGE -- IT MEANS **DOUBLE DANGER FOR YOU!**

WAL, VICKIE -- I'M DOIN' DOUBLE DUTY AS BOTH A DEPUTY AN' APACHE WAR CHIEF, SO TROUBLE'S BOUND TO BE DOUBLE-BARRELED NOW AN' THEN! WATCH YORESELF -- AN' BE ON THE LOOK-OUT FER HOSTILE SCOUTS!



TILES BEYOND-- NEAR GEYSER VALLEY--

HERE'S WHAR THE TWO SETS O' TRACKS MEET-- INDIAN PONIES-- AN' THE SHOD HORSES RIDDEN BY THE GANG! IT'S NO ACCIDENT, IN OPEN COUNTRY LIKE THIS-- THE BRAVES AN' THE OUTLAWS ARE HEADIN' TOWARD A PRE-ARRANGED MEETIN' PLACE--
DOWN BELOW!



AS INJUN STALKS FORWARD...

SUFFERIN' SASSAFRAS-- IT'S A BAND OF PAINTED CHEYENNE! THEY'RE SPOILIN' FER A RUCKUS, SHORE ENOUGH-- AND WHAT'S MORE, THEY'RE IN CAHOOTS WITH ROCKY MANTON!



YEP, THIS SACRED WOLF PAW'S BEEN BIG MEDICINE TUH THE CHEYENNE FER HUNDREDS O' Y'ARS-- AN' JEST LIKE I TOLD YUH--
STEALIN' IT WAS A SHORE-FIRE WAY O' GITTIN' 'EM ON THE WARPATH!

WE RISKED OUR NECKS GITTIN' INTUH THE CHEYENNE CAMP, ROCKY-- BUT THEY DON'T SUSPECT US-- NOT AFTER WE SCATTERED A MOC-CASIN AN' OTHER TRADIN' POST JUNK NEAR THE TEPEES-- JEST AS IF THEY'D BEEN LOST ACCIDENTAL-LIKE BY AN APACHE RAIDIN' PARTY!



WE'VE TRICKED THE CHEYENNE INTUH LEAVIN' THEIR RESERVATION TUH TAKE REVENGE ON THE APACHES-- AN' YUH SAVVY WHAT THAT MEANS! ACCORDIN' TUH LAW, THEY'LL BE SENT TUH OKLAHOMA-- AN' THEIR TRIBAL LAND WILL BE SOLD TUH THE FIRST BIDDER! THAT'S GOIN' TUH BE ME--AS SOON AS THEM PESKY REDSKINS HAVE STIRRED UP ENOUGH OF A RUCKUS TUH MAKE THE GOVERNMENT STEP IN!



THERE IS A PART OF INJUN JONES THAT HAS NEVER BEEN TAMED-- AND IT FLARES UP NOW!

MANTON, I'M THE ONE WHO'S STEPPIN' IN--



-- AN' THAT MEANS THE LAW!

TAKE COVER-- THAT'S INJUN JONES!



IN THE NEXT SECOND-- WITH A FLASHING DOUBLE-DRAW--

YEP-- AN' PLUMB EAGER TUH ACCOMODATE!



THEN-- ROUSING QUICKLY AS A NEST OF RATTLERS--

EE-YAH!
WHO IS
THIS
INJUN
JONES?

A TRUSTED BLOOD BROTHER OF THE
HATED APACHES! AND WHEN HE
MEETS A CHIEF OF THE CHEYENNE--
HE MEETS DEATH!



AN INSTANT TOO LATE-- INJUN SIDESTEPS
THE HISSING BLADE--



INJUN JONES NO GET
PLUGGED, MANTON--
NO GET CARVED UP!
HIM PALEFACE WHO
LIVE LIKE INDIAN--
NOW HIM **DIE**
LIKE INDIAN--
SLOW!

YUH'VE GOT
A JIM-DANDY
IDEE THAR,
CHIEF-- AN' I
KNOW JEST
THE METHOD!
GIT HIM ON A
HOSS-- WE'RE
HEADIN' FER
BUBBLIN'
GEYSER!



SOON AFTERWARD--

CLIMB DOWN, HOMBRE!
WE'RE STAKIN' YUH OUT
OVER THAT GEYSER HOLE
-- AN' LETTIN' THE STEAM
PARBOIL YUH PLUMB OUT
O' YER RENEGADE
HIDE!

YUH CHEYENNE ARE
GITTIN' TRICKED
FER FAIR! IF
YUH WANT YORE
SACRED WOLF
PAW-- IT'S--

TOO BAD YUH DIDN'T
PALAVER SOONER, INJUN
JONES-- BECAUSE
THAT'S THE KIND O'
SECRET GALOOT'S LIKE
YUH **DIE** WITH!



MINUTES LATER--

MEBBE INJUN
JONES NEVER
SQUIRMED
BEFORE,
MANTON--
BUT HE
SHORE
WILL
NOW!

EVEN IF HE'S
TOUGH ENOUGH
TUH STAND THAT
SIZZLIN' STEAM-- THE
GEYSER'S DUE TUH
ERUPT IN A HALF-HOUR!
THAT BOILIN' JET WILL
RIP INJUN JONES APART
-- AN' BLAST WHAT'S
LEFT O' HIS CARCASS
A MILE HIGH!

WITH THE STEAM SEETHING
AROUND INJUN'S BODY--

CRIMPIN' COYOTES-- I'VE
LIVED THROUGH JEST ABOUT
EVERY REDSKIN TORTURE IN
THE BOOKS-- BUT **THIS**
IS PLUMB MORE'N
I KIN TAKE!



BUT INJUN JONES WAS TRAINED BY
THE APACHES TO BEAR PAIN AS
PROUDLY AS HE BEARS HIS
WEAPONS-- AND NOW-- WITH
GRIM DETERMINATION--

STRUGGLIN' WON'T HELP! I'VE
GOT TUH FERGIT THE TORTURE
AN' JEST LAY HERE-- AN'
**KEEP THE STEAM FROM
ESCAPIN' FER
A SPELL!**



THEN, AT GRUELING TWO-MINUTE INTERVALS, INJUN MOVES-- JUST ENOUGH TO SEND A SPOUT OF PENT-UP STEAM HISsing SKYWARD--



THREE MILES AWAY-- AT THE APACHE CAMP--

I HOPE YOU'VE SPOTTED THAT WAR PARTY, RED CLOUD!

STEAM COME FROM BUBBLING GEYSER HEAP STRANGE! RED CLOUD NEVER SEE 'EM THIS BEFORE -- PUFFS CLIMBING IN SKY-- LIKE SMOKE SIGNAL!



RED CLOUD-- YOU NO READ 'EM? IS PLENTY SIGNAL-- THE DANGER WARNING!

APACHES-- GET HORSES! WE RIDE TO BUBBLING GEYSER!



MINUTES LATER--

GOOD HEAVENS-- INJUN!

WAIT! PRETTY QUICK-- GEYSER SHOOT UP BOILING WATER!



YAHOOOO! STAND BACK, APACHES! IF ONE OF US MUST DIE FOR INJUN JONES-- HE IS WORTHY OF A CHIEF!

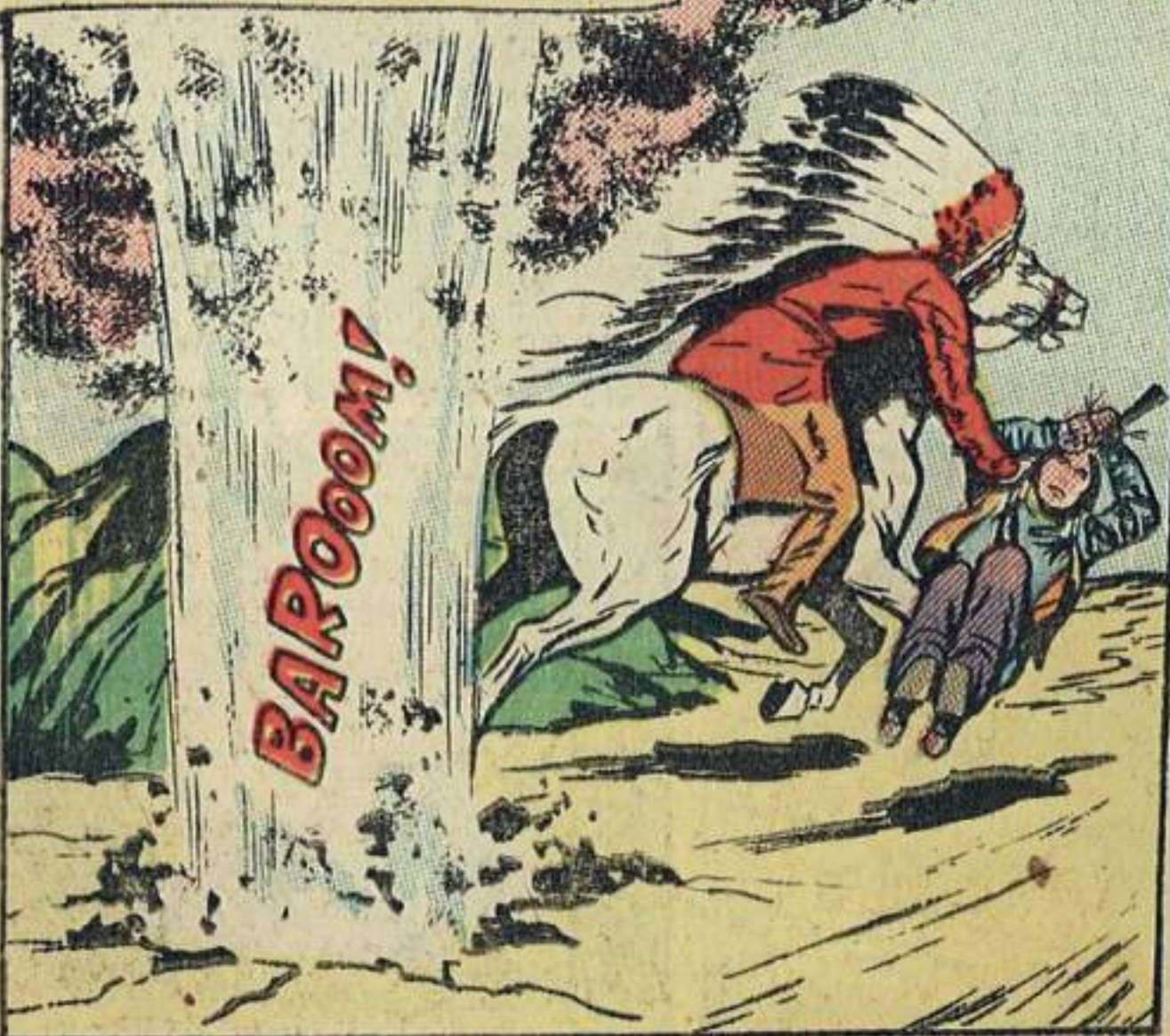


WITHOUT CHECKING HIS PLUNGING CAYUSE, RED CLOUD SWINGS TOWARD THE QUAKING GROUND!

NEVER MIND ME, PARDNER-- SHE'S READY TUH RIP!



THEN-- IN A ROARING JET--



OH, INJUN, I DON'T THINK I'VE EVER LIVED THROUGH A MORE HORRIBLE MOMENT!

THIS ISN'T THE FIRST TIME YU'VE SAVED MUH LIFE, RED CLOUD-- BUT I'D A HEAP RUTHER DIED THAN LEFT THE CAMP UNGUARDED! ROCKY MANTON'S ON HIS WAY WITH A BAND O SCALP-HUNGRY CHEYENNES-- AN' UNLESS WE MOVE PRONTO-- WE WON'T FIND AN APACHE SQUAW LEFT ALIVE!



FOR THE FIRST TIME, RED CLOUD STUDIES THE GROUND-- HIS TRAINED EYES SEEING PERIL IN A SINGLE GLANCE--

PLENTY CHEYENNE-- APACHES OUTNUMBERED BAD! BUT WHAT IS A BATTLE TO US, INJUN JONES-- IF IT DOES NOT HOLD THE POSSIBILITY OF A BRAVE DEATH?

ME-- I'M RARIN' TUH TANGLE WITH ROCKY MANTON AN' HIS CHEYENNE PARDS-- BUT WHY LET 'EM KNOW WE'RE JEST A HANDFUL? THAR'S A BUZZARD SKELETON YONDER-- AN' IT'S JEST WHAT WE NEED TUH SET A TRAP!



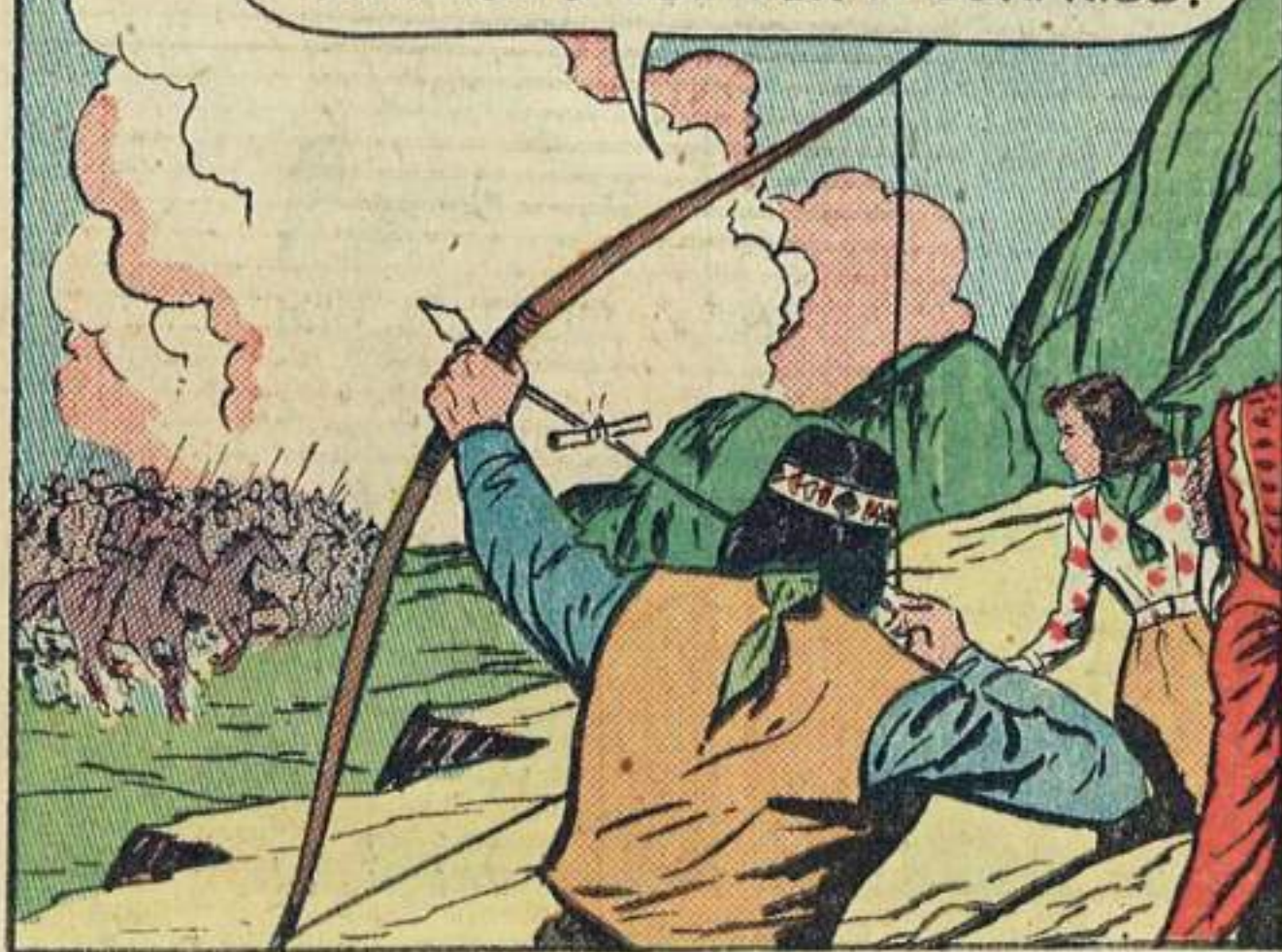
THEN-- WITH A FEW INCHES OF THREAD RIPPED FROM INJUN'S SHIRT--

WE'LL MAKE A COUPLE MORE O' THESE TRICK ARROWS! WHEN THEY'RE SHOT INTUH THE AIR, THIS PIECE O' HOLLOW LEG-BONE MAKES A HIGH-PITCHED WHISTLE-- EXACTLY LIKE THE APACHE WAR SIGNAL!



MINUTES LATER--

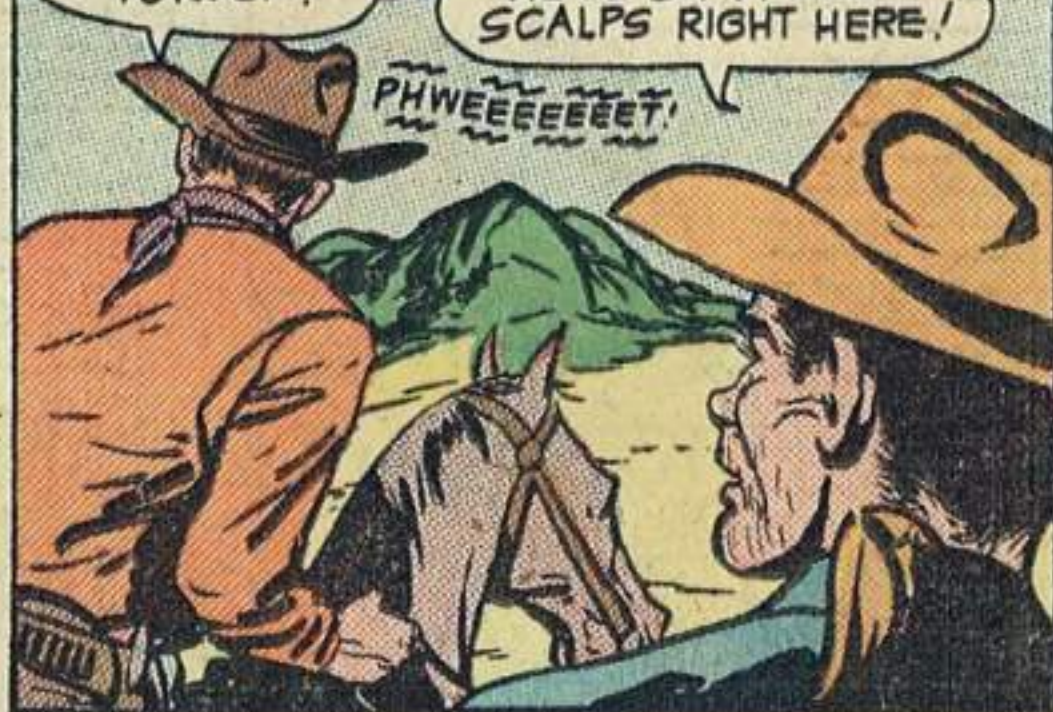
THAR THEY COME! THEY DON'T SAVVY THAR'S AN APACHE BRAVE BEHIND 'EM-- AN' ONE ON THEIR OTHER FLANK! WHEN THE THREE ARROWS WHISTLE OVERHEAD FROM DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS-- ROCKY MANTON'S DUE FER A SURPRISE!



AS THE FIRST SHRILL WHISTLE RISES AND FALLS AMONG THE FOOTHILLS---

GIT THAT, MANTON? THEM APACHES HAVE US SPOTTED-- THEY'RE SKULKIN' AMONG THE ROCKS YONDER!

CAN'T BE MORE'N A HANDFUL-- OR THEY'D TRY TUH SURROUND US! JEST LET 'EM SHOW THEMSELVES-- AN' WE'LL GIT A FEW SCALPS RIGHT HERE!



TO THE ONRUSHING RIDERS,

PINTO CANYON MIGHT SEEM A HAVEN-- BUT CROUCHING ON THE CRAGGY WALLS--



CLIK!

PEERING FROM THE LOFTY LEDGES--

REMEMBER-- SPACE YORE SHOTS! IF WE CAN'T MAKE THIS LOOK LIKE A MASS ATTACK-- WE'RE THE ONES WHO'LL BE TRAPPED!



SUDDENLY-- ECHOING LIKE AN OMINOUS CHORUS--

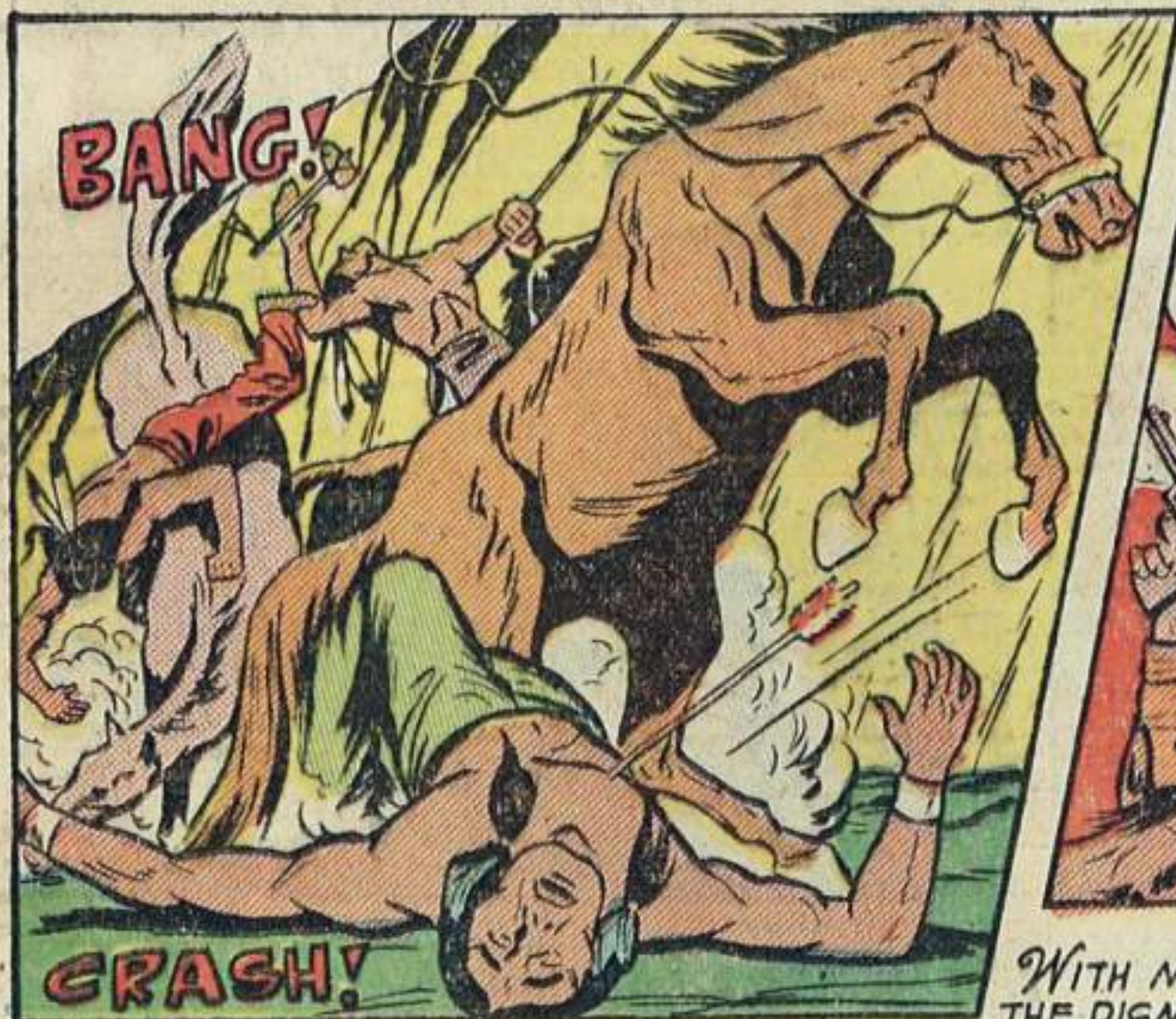
PLENTY APACHES, MANTON-- SOUNDS LIKE 'EM ALL AROUND US!

IT'S A THREE-PRONGED ATTACK-- AN' THAT MEANS THE WHOLE ORNERY APACHE NATION'S OUT ON THE PROD! THAR'S ONLY ONE WAY OPEN-- DIG IN YORE SPURS FER PINTO CANYON!



IN THE FIRST VOLLEY OF THUNDERING SHOTS AND HISSING ARROWS-- A DOZEN RIDERS PITCH FROM THEIR JOSTLING MOUNTS--

AS THE CHEYENNE TURN THEIR HORSES-- DEMORALIZED BY THE HIDDEN FOE--



SEEMS PURTY STRANGE TUH ME, MANTON! IF WE'RE TANGLIN' WITH A COUPLE O' HUNDRED APACHES, THEY'D MEET US HEAD ON-- INSTEAD O' HOLIN' UP FER AN AMBUSH!

YUH'RE PLUMB RIGHT-- THAR CAN'T BE MORE'N A HANDFUL O' BRAVES UP THAR! WE'VE BEEN TRICKED -- AN' I'M FIXIN' TUH TURN THE TABLES!



WITH MANTON LEADING THE DISMOUNTED CHARGE--

THEN, AS AN UNMISTAKABLE WHISTLE SHRILLS ABOVE THE WAR WHOOPS--

TEN OF YUH KIN BLOCK BOTH ENDS O' THE CANYON! WE'LL CHARGE BOTH SLOPES IN FORCE-- AN' IT'S A SHORE BET THAT INJUN JONES AN' HIS APACHE PARDS WON'T KEEP THEIR HAIR MORE'N AN HOUR!



THAR'S ONLY ONE THING THAT'LL SAVE US, RED CLOUD! I'VE GOT TUH RIDE UP TUH PULPIT LEDGE-- UP ON THE CANYON RIM!

MEBBE MOUNTAIN GOAT GET UP THERE -- BUT NEVER HORSE AND RIDER! AND EVEN IF YOU REACH PULPIT LEDGE, ROCK IS PLENTY CRACKED! ROCK WILL GIVE WAY, INJUN JONES-- AND PLUNGE YOU HUNDRED FEET INTO CANYON!



PHWEET! GIT MOVIN' BRONC!

JUMPIN' JIMSON-- THAT'S INJUN JONES' HOSS!

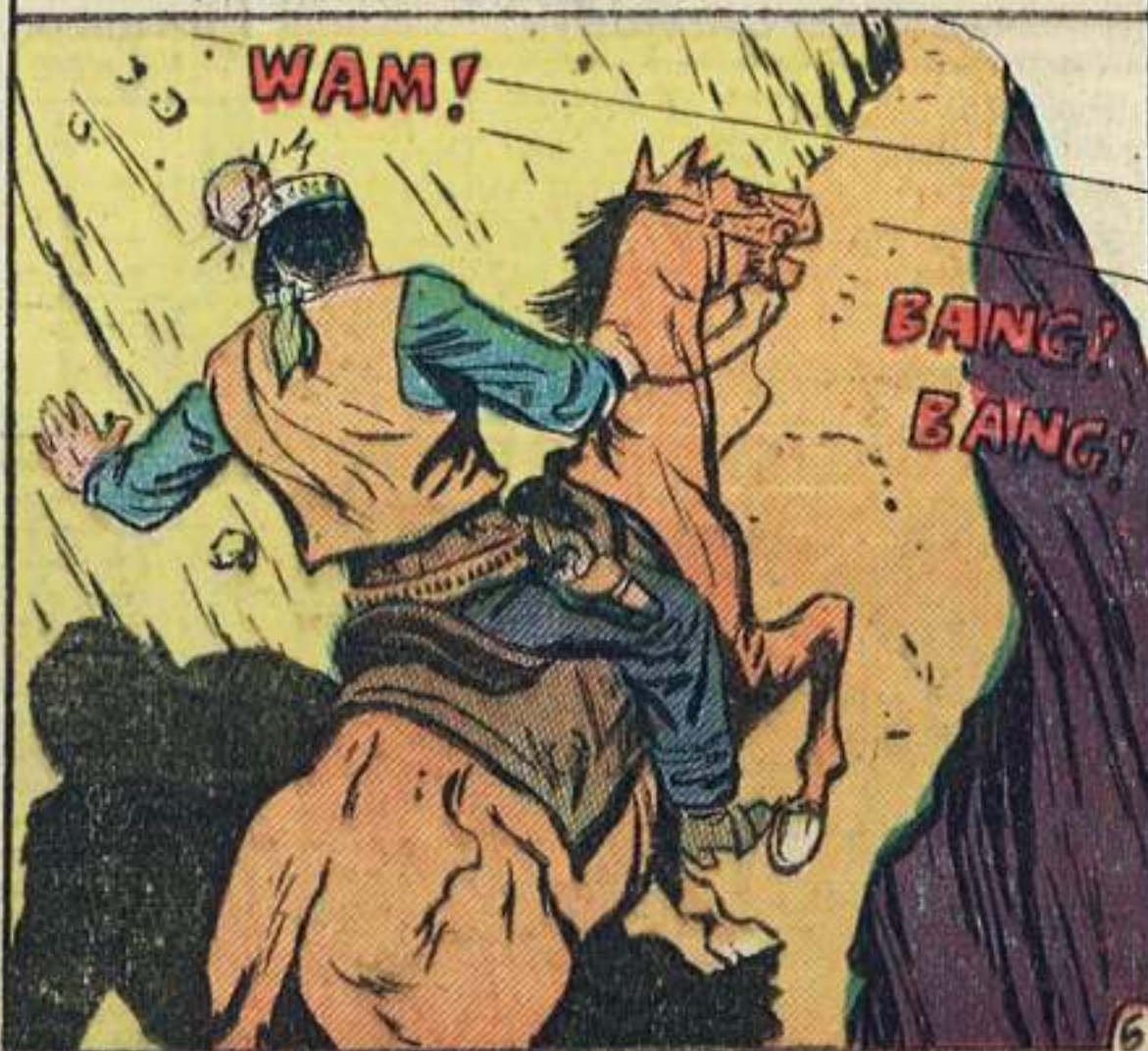


A MOMENT LATER--

HE'S RIDIN' UP! CONCENTRATE YORE FIRE, YUH JUGHEADS-- PICK HIM OFF!



WITH A BLISTERING VOLLEY RATTLING FROM ALL SIDES--







THE ENTIRE LEDGE
WILL GIVE WAY ANY
SECOND-- AND
INJUN'S TOO BUSY
WITH MANTON
TO NOTICE!

QUICK-- GIVE ME THE
BLUNT-HEADED ARROW
WE USE FOR SMALL
GAME!

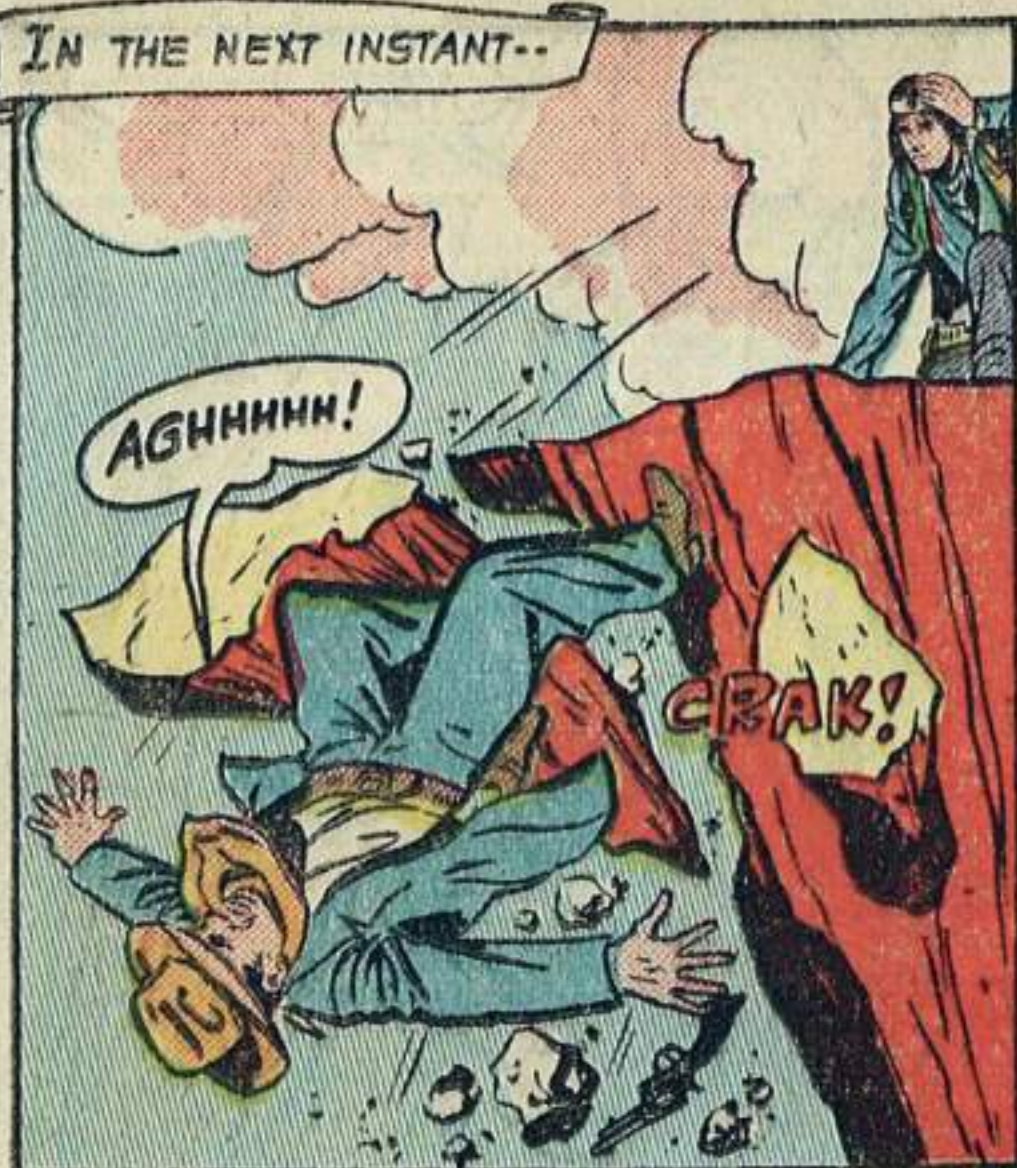
CAREFULLY, RED CLOUD AIMS HIS POWERFUL WAR BOW--
AND AS THE ARROW WHIZZES UP--



NOW BLAST
YUH-- YUH'RE
GITTIN'
LEAD!

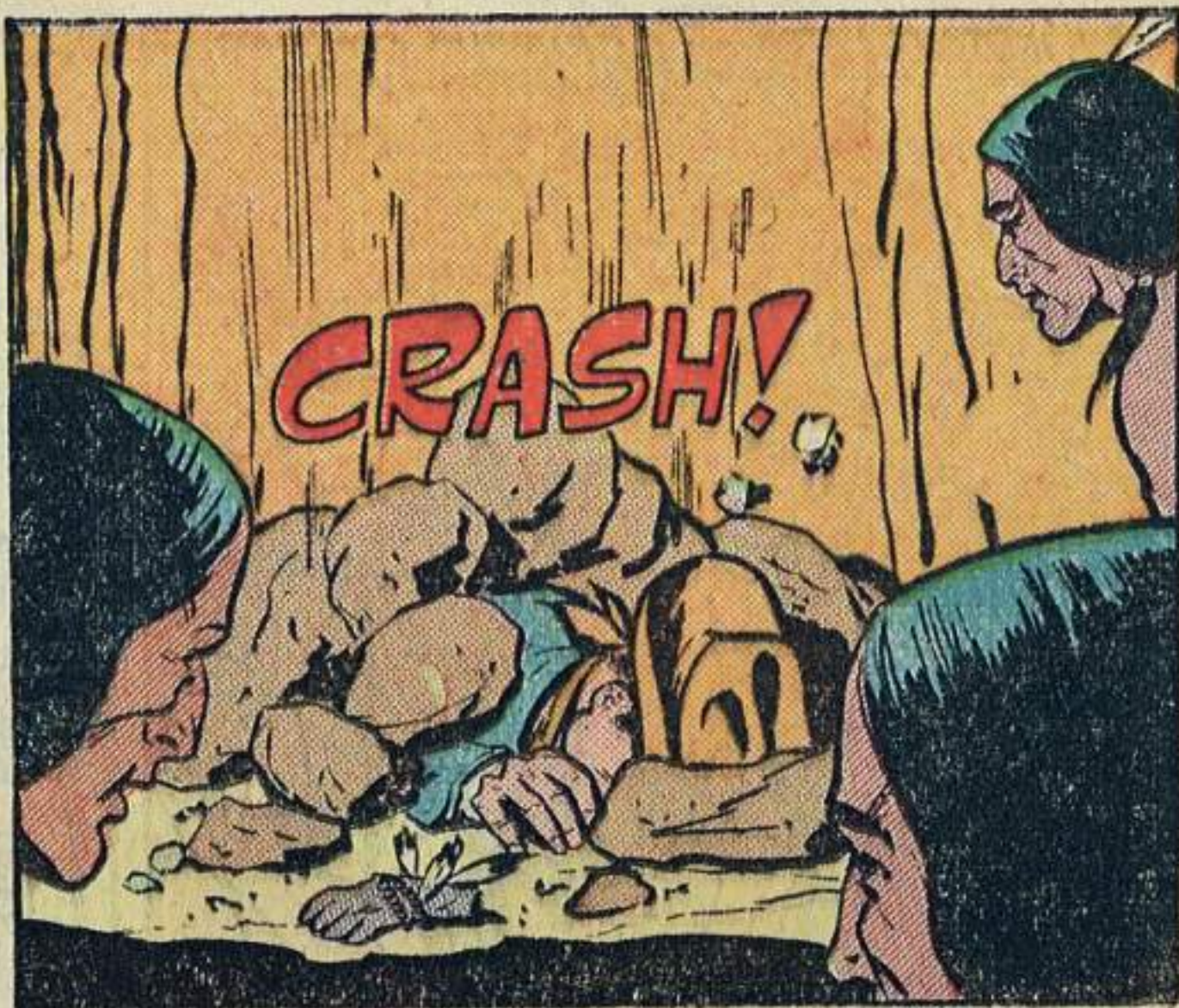
THWOK!

IN THE NEXT INSTANT--



AGHHHHH!

CRACK!



CRASH!

THE SACRED
WOLF PAW!
MANTON TRICKED
US! IT WAS
IN HIS
POCKET
ALL THE
TIME!

CHEYENNE--HOLD
YOUR FIRE!
INJUN JONES
HAS PROVED
THE APACHES
ARE NOT OUR
ENEMIES!

AS MANTON'S ACCOMPLICES TRY
TO SNEAK FROM THE CANYON--

EE-YAH! DEATH
TO THE PALEFACE
DOGS-- WHO
TURNED US
AGAINST OUR
FRIENDS!

LATER--

WE HAVE SHED
THE BLOOD OF OUR
BROTHERS-- BUT NOW
OUR BOW STRINGS
ARE UNLOOSENED!
LET THE SMOKE
OF THE COUNCIL
PIPE PROVE
OUR HEARTS
ARE GOOD!

FROM NOW ON--THERE WILL
BE NO WAR PAINT WHEN
CHEYENNE AND APACHE
MEET! AN' THE NEXT
TIME A LOW-SLUNG
VARMINT LIKE ROCKY
MANTON TRIES TUH
GIT THE FRONTIER
TUH BLAZIN'-- WE'RE
GOIN' TUH SEE THAT
HE GITS HIS COME-
UPPANCE--
TOGETHER!



CRACK!



LISTEN FOR THE THUD OF RACING
MUSTANGS-- WATCH FOR THE FLAMING
ARROW THAT HISSES A CHALLENGE TO
WAR-- WHEN INJUN JONES
RETURNS IN THE
NEXT ISSUE!

THE END

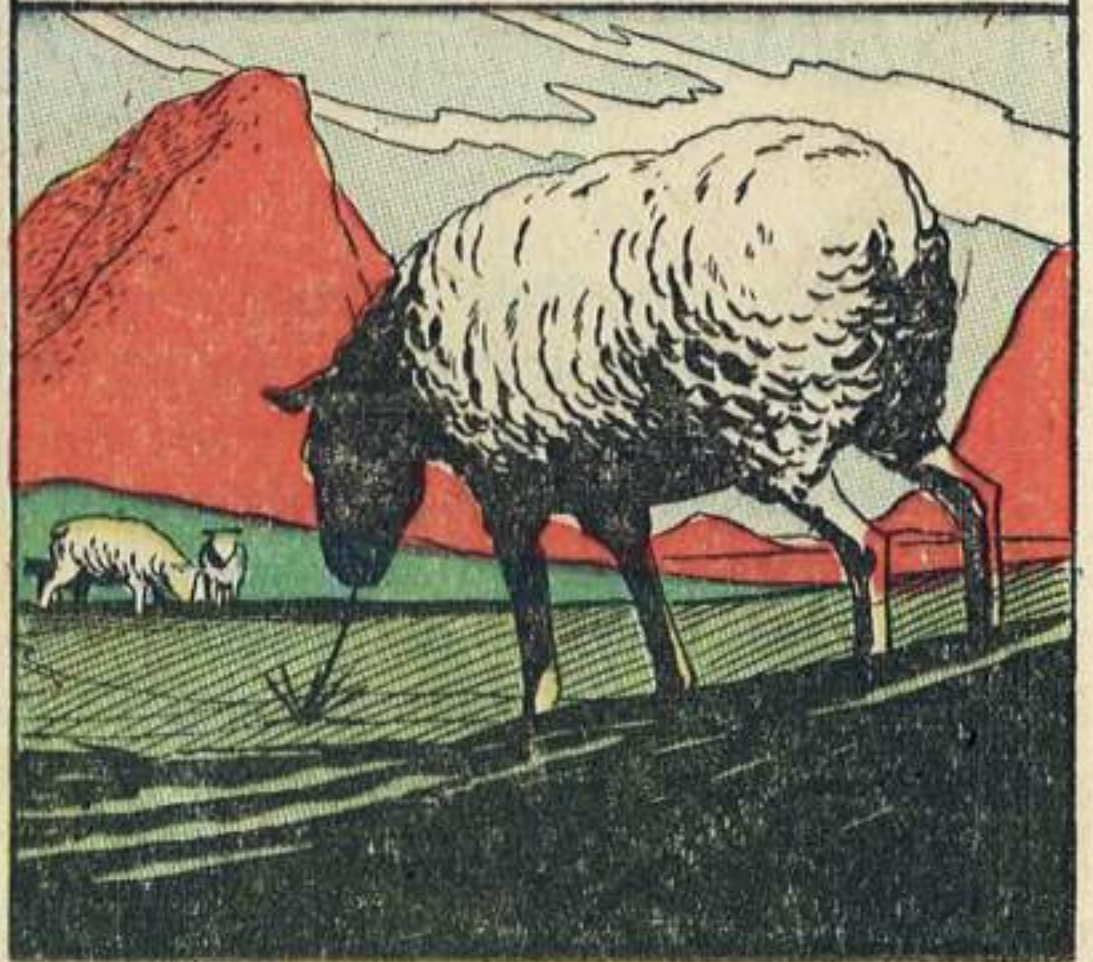
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SHEEP WAR

WHEN SHEEP WERE FIRST INTRODUCED ONTO THE WESTERN RANGES IN THE 1800'S, COWBOYS FOUND THEIR CATTLE HERDS STAMPEDING THE MOMENT THEY CAME INTO SCENTING DISTANCE OF THE SHEEP -- AND THAT WAS THE BEGINNING OF THE FAMED RANGE WAR BETWEEN THE CATTLE RANCHERS AND THE SHEEP HERDERS!



WHEREVER THEY GRAZED, SHEEP ATE THE GROUND BARE -- AND LEFT THE LAND WORTHLESS! SHEEP WERE EVEN KNOWN TO EAT A FOREST OF YOUNG TREES IF THERE WAS NOTHING ELSE TO FEED ON!



WITHOUT ANY VEGETATION TO ABSORB AND HOLD WATER, THE LAND BEGAN TO ERODE AWAY BY HEAVY RAINS -- AND RAVINES AND GULLIES WERE FORMED, BECOMING DEEPER AND DEEPER AS THE MONTHS AND YEARS PASSED!



SOON, ALL THROUGH THE SOUTHWEST, SCENES LIKE THIS COULD BE SEEN!



AROUSED, THE ANGRY CATTLE RANCHERS AND COWBOYS DREW A "DEAD LINE" -- BEYOND WHICH THEY SAID THE SHEEP HERDERS COULD NOT GO!



MANY BRAVE MEN DIED IN THE ENSUING WARS BETWEEN THE TWO FACTIONS!



BUT MODERN SCIENCE FINALLY PUT AN END TO THAT WAR! TODAY, THANKS TO IRRIGATION AND SPRINKLER SYSTEMS, THERE IS ENOUGH GRAZING GROUND FOR BOTH SHEEP AND CATTLE -- AND THE MODERN WEST IS A FRIENDLY LAND!

KILLER'S Poison

THE GROWING CROWD of stunned townsfolk stared gravely at Jim Forrest, as he tugged at his gray, straggling mustache. The aging sheriff shrugged his shoulders wearily and pointed to the crumpled body on the ground. "I been peace officer of Oakville nigh on twenty years," he said slowly, "but this is the fust murder I ever come across. Don't rightly know how to go about solvin' it, nohow."

He stooped to examine the hilt of the knife that still protruded from the corpse. "I've heard tell about catchin' murderers by fingerprints, but I shore don't SEE any prints on this knife...I reckon the killer wore gloves!"

A burst of loud, sneering laughter split the autumn air. Jim Forrest turned slowly to survey the dapper figure of a stranger, dressed in loud sportclothes, which immediately branded him as a city man, one who didn't belong in the quiet woodlands of Oakville. "Hmmm," mused Jim. "You're new in these parts, ain't you?"

"Yeah," the stranger smirked. "I blew into this jerkwater burg last night and woulda kept right on goin', except I had engine trouble. And I'll be on my way again just as soon as that hayseed mechanic in this whistle stop gets around to fixin' it!"

Jim Forrest nodded soberly and looked around the little wooded glen which had been the scene of the murder. "Cain't figger out why anybody would want to kill poor Jed Hawkins, unless it was for REVENGE! When Jed come here two years ago, he told me he'd turned state's evidence against some big city racketeer, and sent 'im to that there electricity chair. Guess that's why Jed settled in a small town like Oakville, hopin' that this here racketeer's gang would never find him. But I reckon

they finally did..."

He broke off suddenly and walked swiftly to a thick pile of brush some ten feet from the body. Bending over and examining the clump closely, he said, "Hmmm, this is whar the killer lay in ambush, waitin' fer Jed to pass by on his way home. See whar the poison ivy leaflets are all broken up by someone lyin' on 'em? Wait... POISON IVY!"

Turning swiftly to the deputy sheriff, Jim said, "See that everyone who knew Jed Hawkins doesn't leave town for the next twelve hours...it takes at least that long fer poison ivy to break out, and when it does, we'll KNOW who the killer is!"

The dapper stranger seemed to pale suddenly. Jim said offhandedly, "That means you'll have to postpone your trip too, friend ...at least for twelve hours. You're not under suspicion, o' course, but I wanta handle this case like them detectives do in them thar mystery stories. We'll put you up in the town hotel, at the town's expense, so I don't reckon you kin have no complaint."

That night, hiding in the shadows outside the hotel, Jim Forrest watched the sporty stranger trying to sneak out to his car. Swiftly, Jim followed, his jaw firmly set. Just as he was about to collar his victim the stranger whirled, whipping out an ugly, short-snouted pistol. "No yuh don't!" Jim roared, bringing up his gnarled fist in a terrific smash to the chin. The stranger dropped in a groaning heap.

Grinning, Jim picked up the gun. "Thought it'd be easy to outsmart a small-town peace officer, eh?" he snarled. "Wal, you just outsmarted YOURSELF...because poison ivy *ain't* poisonous when its leaves turn brown in the autumn! I'd have had no evidence against you if you hadn't tried runnin' away!"

BANTAM BUCKAROO

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE SHERIFF GETS HIMSELF PLUGGED-- LEAVING THE RANGE DEFENSELESS AGAINST THE QUICK-SHOOTING RAIDS OF A TOUGH HOMBRE LIKE **SHIFTY SMITH**? WELL, PARDNER-- IT BOILS DOWN TO A QUESTION OF SAVVY IN DEALING WITH VARMINTS-- AND **THE BANTAM BUCKAROO'S** RARIN' TO SHOW YOU THE METHOD!



AT THE HARNEY RANCH-- CRIMPERS, MIKE--

LOBO-- I WISH YUH'D GIT RID O' THAT SLAT-FACED CRITTER! I GIT THE WILLIES JEST **LOOKIN'** AT HIM!

YUH'VE GOT NO CALL TUH BELITTLE **CHICO**-- JEST BE-CAUSE HE HAPPENS TUH BE A **BUZZARD!** EVER SINCE I FIXED THAT BROKEN WING O' HIS'N A COUPLE O' MONTHS AGO-- HE **LIKES** IT HERE! I JEST HAVEN'T GOT THE HEART TUH SHOO HIM AWAY!



MEBBE SO, LOBO-- BUT YUH'VE GOT TUH STOP THAT THAR MONSTER FROM ROOSTIN' IN THE HEN HOUSE EVERY NIGHT! I AIM TUH DRAW THE LINE **SOMEWHAR!**

MIKE-- THAR'S A HEAP O' WEASELS AN' RATS GITTS INTUH THAT COOP! AN' IF THAR'S ANYTHIN' THAT'S PIZEN ON VARMINTS-- IT'S A **BUZZARD!**



SUDDENLY--ECHOING FROM THE DISTANCE--

HOPPIN' HORNED TOADS-- WHAR'S THOSE SHOTS COMIN' FROM, MIKE?

HARD TUH SAY, SON! RECKON THAR'S A RUCKUS MEbbe A MILE AWAY-- BUT THE DIRECTION'S PLUMB DECEIVIN'!



THEN--AS CHICO GLIDES SKYWARD
IN A SOARING SPIRAL--

WHAR IN
TUNKET
IS THAT
BUZZARD
O' YORES
HEADIN'
LOBO?

I MEANT TUH TELL YUH--
I'VE GOT CHICO TRAINED!
IF HE FINDS ANYONE LYIN'
HELPLESS OUT ON THE
RANGE-- HE'LL DRIVE THE
OTHER BUZZARDS AWAY--
AN WAIT UNTIL HELP
COMES! AN SHORE AS
SHOOTIN', MIKE-- HE'S
SPOTTED SOMEONE
OUT THAR NOW!



MINUTES LATER...

WHAT'D I TELL
YUH, MIKE--
CHICO'S
FOUND THE
WADDY
WHO GOT
PLUGGED!



CRIMPIN'
COYOTES--
THINGS MUST'VE
BEEN POPPIN'
FER SHORE!
THAT'S THE
SHERIFF!

YUH'RE SHOT UP
PURTY BAD,
HOMBRE--
AN' WITH A
FAST DRAW
LIKE YORES
THAR'S JEST
ONE WAY IT
COULD'VE
HAPPENED!

YEP--AMBUSH! I
WAS TRAILIN' SHIFTY
SMITH AN' HIS TWO
PARDS--THEY DIS-
MOUNTED AN' LET
THEIR HOSSES AMBLE
ON A SPELL-- AN'
THEN THREW A
PASSEL O' LEAD AT
ME FROM BEHIND
THEM ROCKS!



SHIFTY SMITH-- THE SHOOTIN'EST GALOOT
FROM HERE TUH SANTY FEE! CRIMPERS,
SHERIFF, I THOUGHT YORE POSSE
WAS CHASIN' THOSE POLECATS
MILES FROM HERE!



THEY WAS, YOUNG FELLER-- BUT THE GANG
MUST'VE DOUBLED BACK! RECKON SHIFTY SMITH'S
GITTIN' DESPERATE-- THAR'S A \$2,000 REWARD
POSTED FER HIM, AN' A THOUSAND EACH FER
HIS WADDIES-- AN' THEY DASNT SHOW THEIR
FACES ANYWHAR, EVEN
TUH GIT GRUB!

GOLLY! WITH THE
SHERIFF PLUGGED
AN' THE POSSE
AWAY IN THE
NEXT COUNTY--
SOMEONE'S
GOTTA TANGLE
WITH THOSE
BACK-SHOOTIN'
VARMINTS!

WAL-- DON'T FIGGER
IT'LL BE YUH LOBO!
I'LL BE AT THE
HOOSEGOW ALL NIGHT,
TAKIN' CHARGE,
AFTER I GIT THE
SHERIFF PATCHED
UP-- AN' I WANT
YOU AN' THAT
FLYIN' FLEA-BAG O'
YORE'N TUH STAY PUT
UNTIL I GIT
BACK, SAVVY?

AS MIKE AND THE SHERIFF RIDE OFF--

I WAS SHORE HANKERIN' TUH COL-
LECT THAT \$4,000 REWARD, CHICO!
RECKON MIKE'S GOT THE FINAL
SAY--SO-- BUT IF SHIFTY SMITH
STARTS ANYTHIN'-- YOU AN' ME
ARE GOIN' TUH GIVE 'EM A
COME-UPPANCE THEY'LL NEVER
FERGIT!



LATE THAT NIGHT-- A SHORT DISTANCE
FROM THE HARNEY RANCH--

SHIFTY-- I'M
PLUMB TUCKERED!
HAVEN'T HAD A
SQUARE MEAL
FER SO LONG--
MUH BACKBONE'S
RUBBIN' UP
AG'INST MUH
BELT BUCKLE!

DOESN'T SEEM
TUH BE MUCH
ACTIVITY
DOWN THAR!
WAIT HERE--
I AIM TUH
FORAGE
AROUND FER
SOMETHIN' TUH
CHAW ON!





AS LOBO REACHES THE FOOT
OF THE SLOPE --

RIDERS!
I'D BETTER
HOLE UP--
UNTIL I
SAVVY
WHO
THEY
ARE!

DURNED IF I KIN
FIGGER WHAT'S KEEP-
IN' SHIFTY-- BUT I
HEARD SOMETHIN'
MAKE A POWERFUL
CRASH!

SHIFTY! CRIMPIN' COYOTES-- NOW
I REMEMBER THAT MEAN-LOOKIN'
PUSS ON THE REWARD POSTERS!
THAT HOMBRE STRETCHED OUT
OVER THAR IS THE ONE AN' ONLY
SHIFTY SMITH-- AN' THESE
HERE ARE HIS TWO PARDS!

THEN, STARK AND STILL IN THE
RISING MOONLIGHT--

HOPPIN'
HORNED
TOADS--
LOOK!

SHIFTY!
THAT
BUZZARD'S
A SHORE
SIGN,
PINTO--
HE'S A
GONER!

PORE OL'
SHIFTY! HE
DID THIS
FER US,
SLIM-- HE
KICKED
THE BUCKET
TRYIN' TUH
GIT GRUB
FER HIS
PARDS!

I FEEL PLUMB BOWED DOWN,
PINTO! SHIFTY SMITH AN' ME
MUST'VE RUSTLED TEN THOUSAND
HEAD IN OUR DAY-- TUH SAY
NOTHIN' O' THE BANK JOBS!
IMAGINE A RIPROARIN'
CUSTOMER LIKE HIM--
WITH ONLY A MEASLY
\$2,000 ON HIS HEAD!

I DUNNO, SLIM-- TWO
THOUSAND'S QUITE A
NICE HEAP O'
CHANGE!

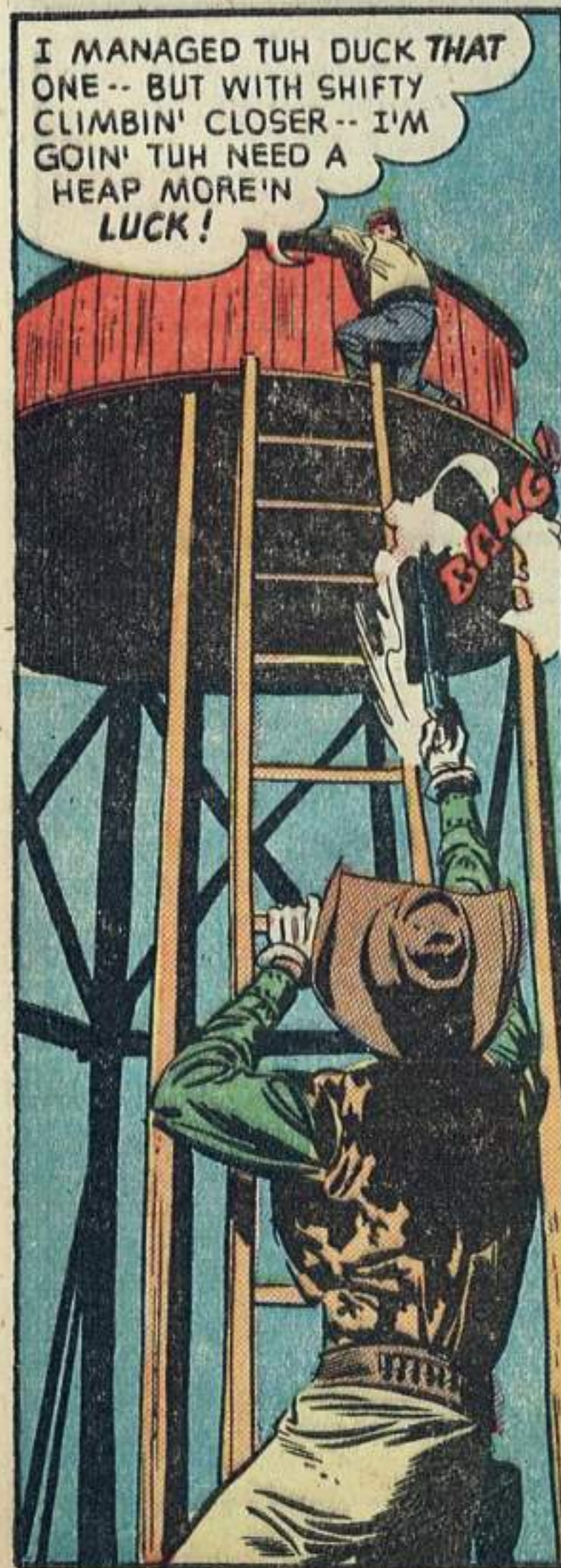
COME TUH THINK OF IT-- YUH'RE
PLUMB RIGHT! PINTO-- MEBBE WE
OWE IT TUH SHIFTY'S MEMORY TUH
COLLECT THAT THAR REWARD!

THE SHERIFF IS LAID UP-- AND ALL HIS DEPUTIES ARE OUT
RIDIN' WITH THE POSSE-- AN' THEY'RE
THE ONLY HOMBRES IN TOWN WHO KIN
IDENTIFY US AS SHIFTY SMITH'S ACCOM-
PLICES! WE'LL TAKE THIS HERE BANDANNA
WITH SHIFTY'S INITIALS TUH THE
HOOSEGOW-- TUH CLINCH THINGS,
WE'LL GIT THE WADDY ON DUTY
TUH RIDE OUT AN' IDENTIFY THE
REMAINS-- AFTER WHICH WE'LL
HAVE A RIGHT TUH DEMAND
THE REWARD TONIGHT!

CRIMPERS! IF I KIN GIT TUH TOWN
AHEAD O' THOSE VARMINTS-- MIKE
WILL BE ABLE TUH NAB 'EM RIGHT
THAR IN THE HOOSEGOW!

JUMPIN' JIMSON--- I
FEEL LIKE I'VE BEEN
TROMPLED BY A
BRAHMA BULL!









WHY, YUH LOW-SLUNG RANGE RAT-- SHOOTIN' ME IN COLD BLOOD'S BAD ENOUGH-- BUT IF YUH KIN STAND PUTTIN' LEAD INTUH THE MORTAL REMAINS O' SHIFTY SMITH-- SO HELP ME, I HOPE HE RISES UP AN' SPOOKS YUH FER THE REST O' YORE LIVES!

HOMBRE-- THE DAY I'M HAUNTED BY SHIFTY SMITH-- I'LL SAVVY IT'S TIME I SHIED AWAY FROM SALOONS!

YUUGH!



HOLY HOSS MACK-EREL-- LOOK!

IT'S SHIFTY'S GHOST-- AN' HE'S A HEAP MORE REPULSIVE THAN HE USED TO BE!

YUUGH!



YAA-HOOOO! GIT SET FER A RUCKUS, MIKE!

LOBO! GLORY BE-- WHAT'LL YUH THINK UP NEXT?



MIGHT AS WELL GIT IN MUH LICKS **NOW** BEFORE YUH YALLER-BACKED BANDICOOTS ARE SKEERED INTUH A STATE O' HIGH-STERIA!

CRIMPIN' COYOTES-- WHAT KIND O' SKYLARKIN'S GOIN' ON HERE?

POW!



I'LL TRY TUH GIVE YUH A ROUGH IDEE, HOMBRE-- AND I REALLY MEAN **ROUGH**!

CRASH!

A MOMENT LATER--

THAT'S THE TICKET, LOBO! NO USE WASTIN' GOOD CATTLE FEED! AN' BESIDES, I'D HATE TUH SEE THAT SIDEWINDER **SMOTHER** TUH DEATH BEFORE WE COLLECT THAT REWARD!



SWOOSH

NEXT DAY--

WAL, LOBO-- HIS LOOKS SHORE AIN'T NOTHIN' TUH CROW ABOUT -- BUT RECKON THAR'S SOMETHIN' TUH BE SAID FER THAT FOWL, AFTER ALL!

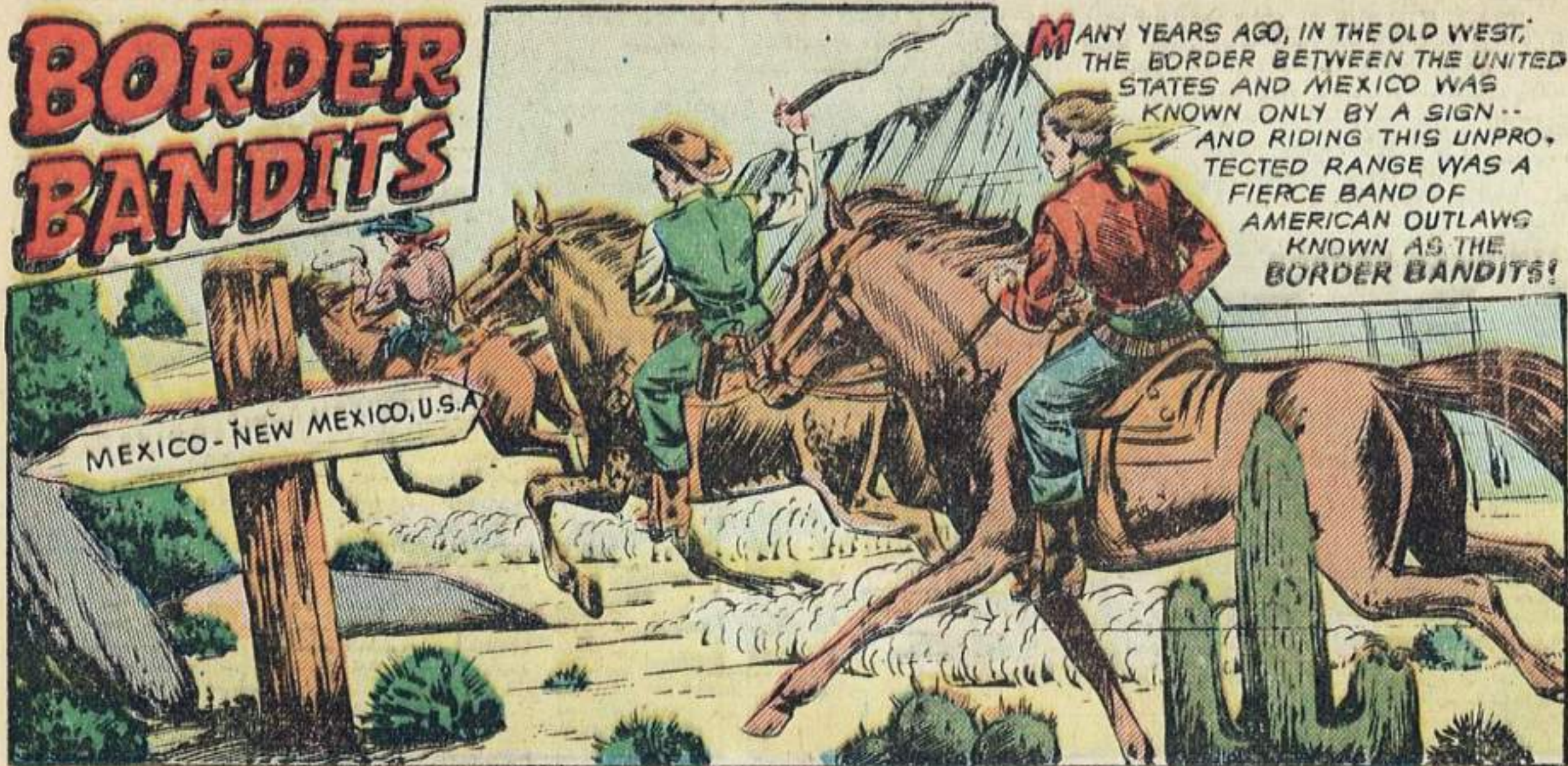
IT'S JEST LIKE I TOLD YUH, MIKE-- IF THAR'S ANYTHIN' THAT'S PIZEN ON VARMINTS -- IT'S A **BUZZARD**!



Your Pulse will be bouncing like a Chuck-Wagon when **THE BANTAM BUCKAROO** squares off for Trouble-- **IN THE NEXT ISSUE!**

THE **END** ®

BORDER BANDITS



MANY YEARS AGO, IN THE OLD WEST, THE BORDER BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND MEXICO WAS KNOWN ONLY BY A SIGN -- AND RIDING THIS UNPROTECTED RANGE WAS A FIERCE BAND OF AMERICAN OUTLAWS KNOWN AS THE BORDER BANDITS!

THE BANDITS BEGAN THEIR DEPREDATIONS BY HOLDING UP STAGECOACHES CARRYING PASSENGERS AND MAIL -- AND THEY SOON FORCED A HALT IN PRACTICALLY ALL TRANSPORTATION BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES!



THEN THE OUTLAWS TURNED TO RUSTLING CATTLE FROM THE RICH SPANISH RANCHERS ON THE MEXICAN SIDE OF THE BORDER!



ONCE ON THE AMERICAN SIDE, THE RUSTLERS WOULD RE-BRAND THE CATTLE WITH A "RUNNING IRON" -- WHICH WAS NOTHING MORE THAN A RED-HOT POKER!



CERTAIN UNETHICAL AMERICAN RANCHERS ASKED NO QUESTIONS WHEN THEY BOUGHT THE CATTLE FROM THE OUTLAWS -- IN FACT, THEY GRINNINGLY CALLED IT "SWINGING A WIDE ROPE!"



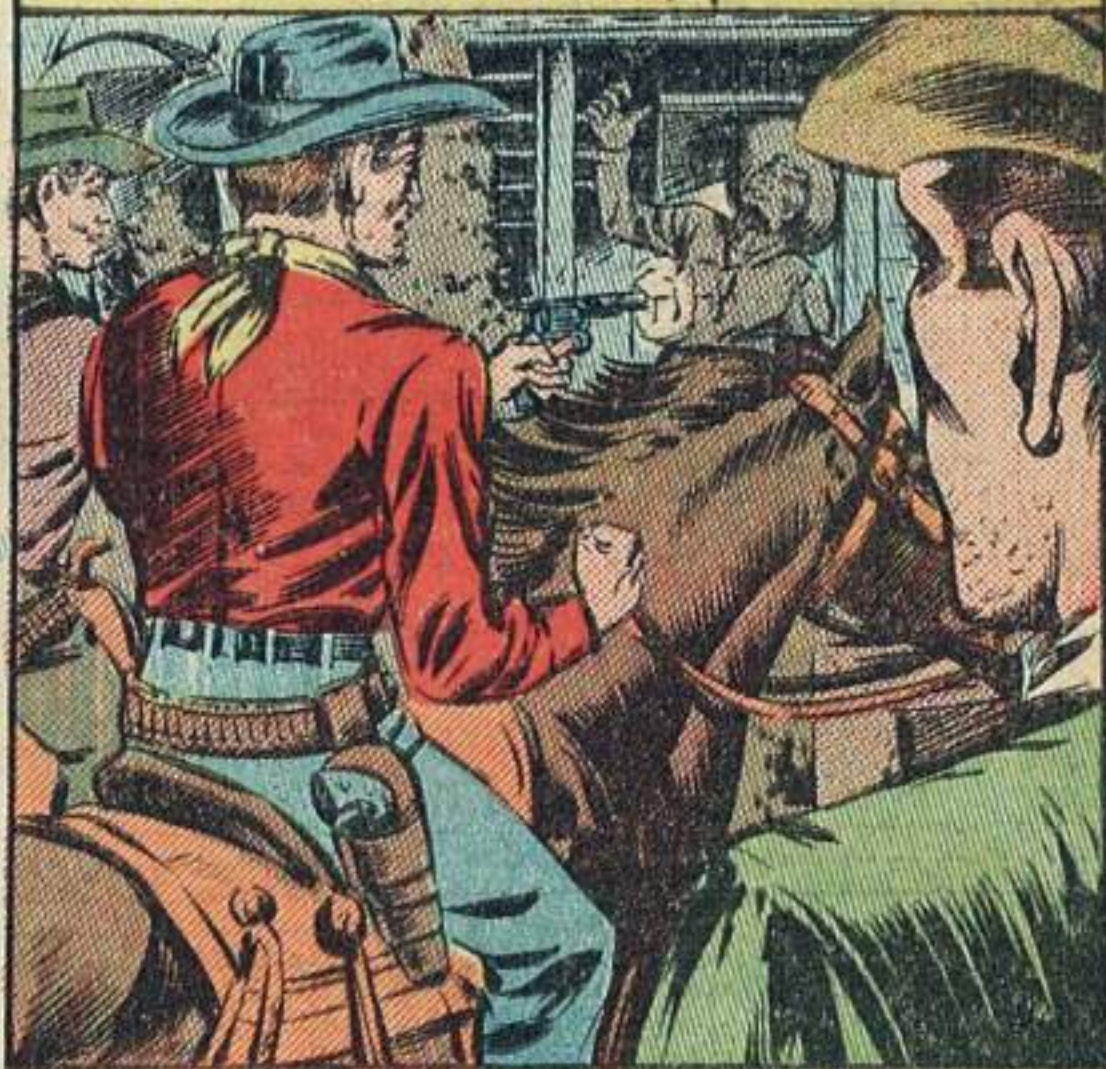
AFTER DIVIDING THEIR LOOT, THE BORDER BANDITS WOULD RIDE INTO THE NEARBY TOWNS IN THE SAN SIMON VALLEY TO GAMBLE AND DRINK AND FIGHT-- AND THE TOWNSPEOPLE ALWAYS MADE SURE TO GIVE THEM PLENTY OF ELBOW ROOM!

RUN FOR COVER-- THE BORDER BANDITS ARE BACK!

BANG! BANG!



THEN, WHEN THE OUTLAWS NEEDED MORE MONEY, BACK THEY'D RIDE TO THE MEXICAN RANCHES-- FOR MORE PLUNDER!



FINALLY, THE MEXICAN RANCHERS IN THE AREA Banded TOGETHER TO PROTECT THEIR LIVES AND PROPERTY!

THE BANDITOS MUST BE STOPPED-- BEFORE THERE ARE NOT ENOUGH OF US LEFT TO FIGHT THEM!

SI-- DEATH TO THE BANDITOS!



THE NEXT TIME THE BANDITS MADE A RAID ACROSS THE BORDER, THEY FOUND RANCH AFTER RANCH STRANGELY DESERTED-- UNTIL THEY CAME UPON ONE RANCH THAT WAS STOUTLY DEFENDED BY PRACTICALLY EVER MEXICAN IN THE AREA! ENRAGED BY THIS SHOW OF RESISTANCE, THE OUTLAWS IMMEDIATELY LAID SEIGE TO THE RANCH-HOUSE!

GIT A WAGON FULL O' HAY FROM THEIR BARN AN' SET FIRE TO IT-- WE'LL SOON SMOKE 'EM OUT!



BUT BEFORE THE OUTLAWS COULD SEND THE BLAZING HAY WAGON CRASHING INTO THE RANCH-HOUSE, A LARGE FORCE OF U.S. RANGERS ARRIVED ON THE SCENE, DETERMINED TO WIPE OUT THE BORDER BANDITS ONCE AND FOR ALL!

ALL BUT FIVE OF THE BANDITS DIED UNDER THE BLAZING SIX-GUNS OF THE RANGERS-- AND THOSE FIVE WENT TO THE GALLONS, A GRIM REMINDER THAT LIFE AND PROPERTY IN THE WEST WERE TO BE HELD SACRED, NO MATTER WHAT THE NATIONALITY!



THE END

FLASH!

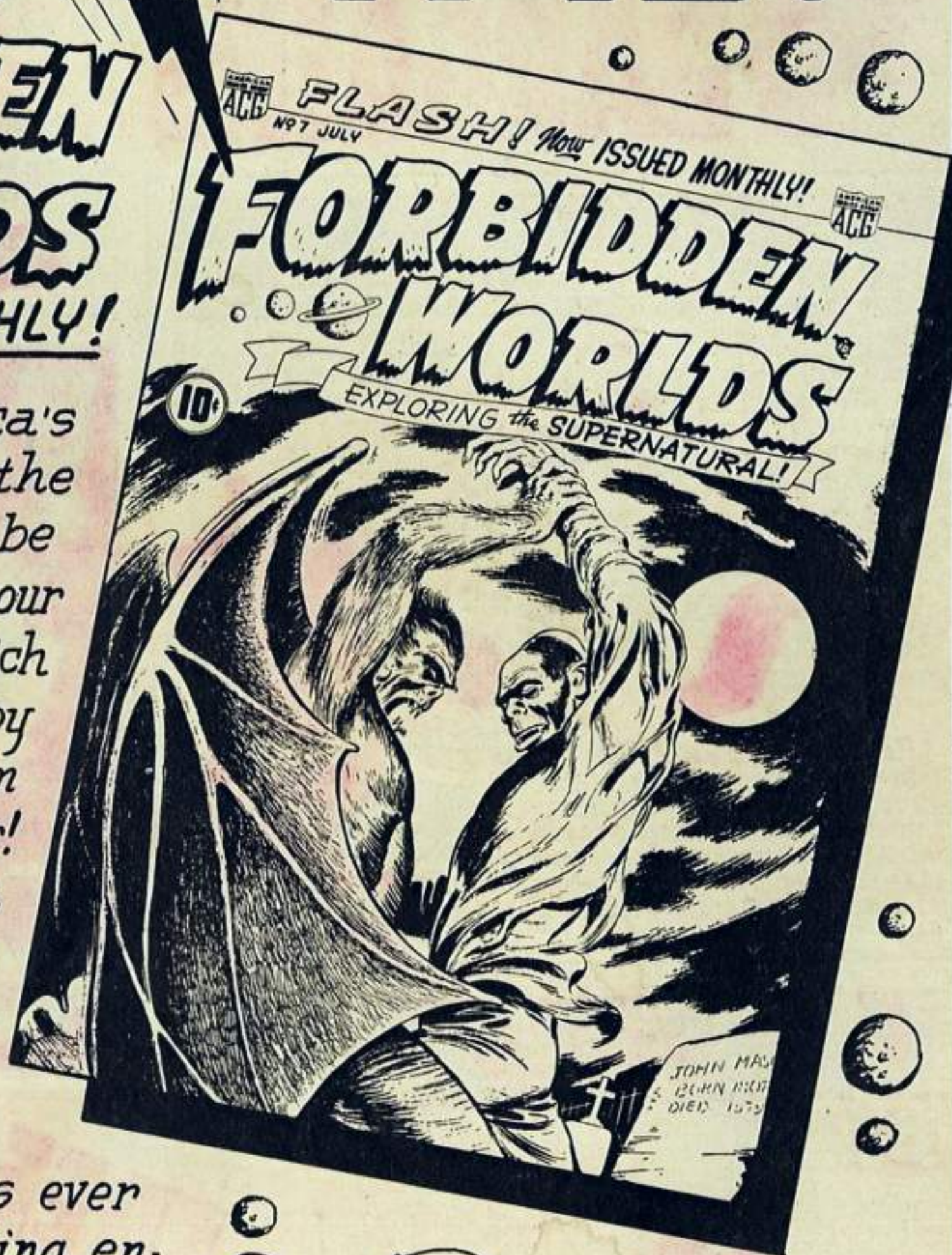
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